



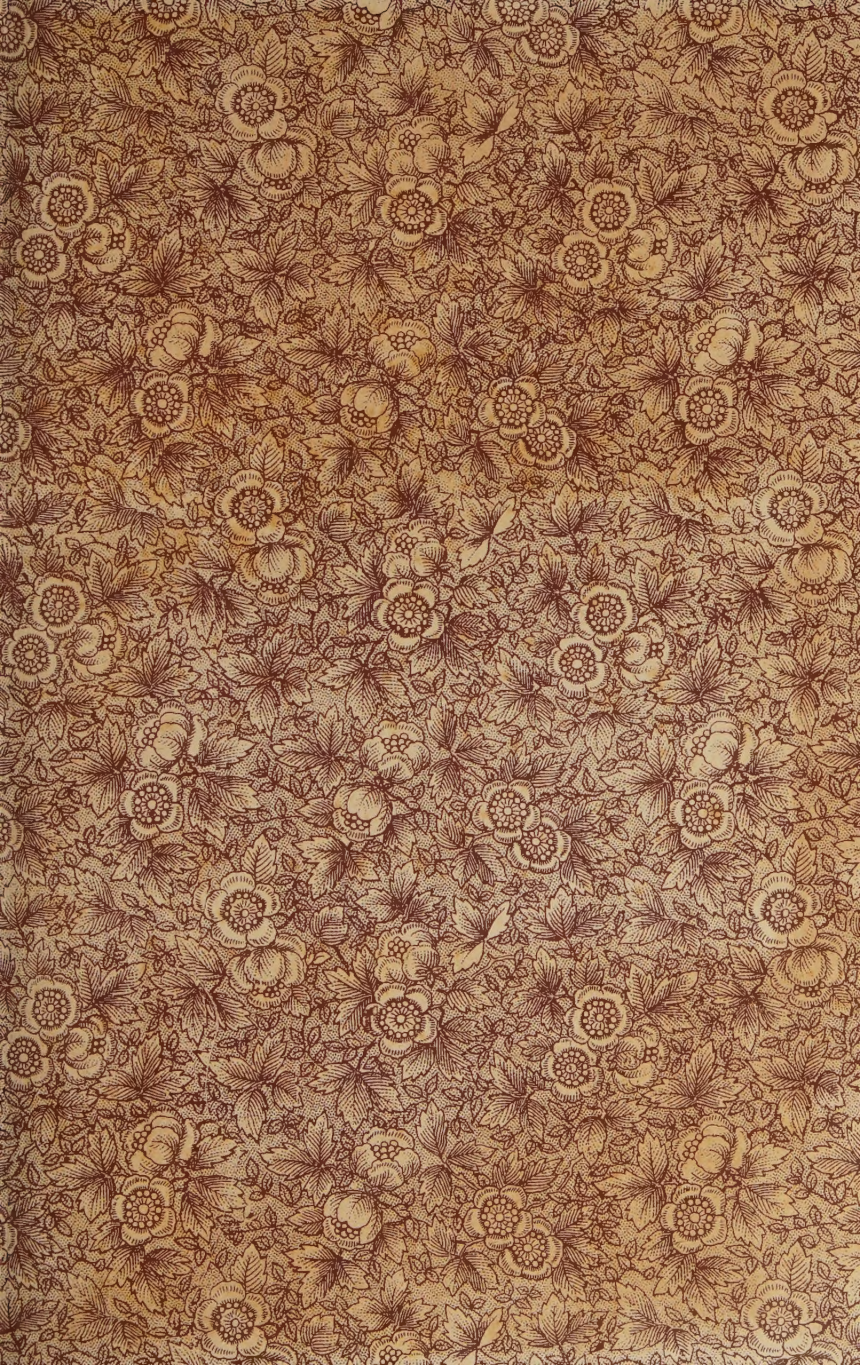




GEORGE SHERRIFF.

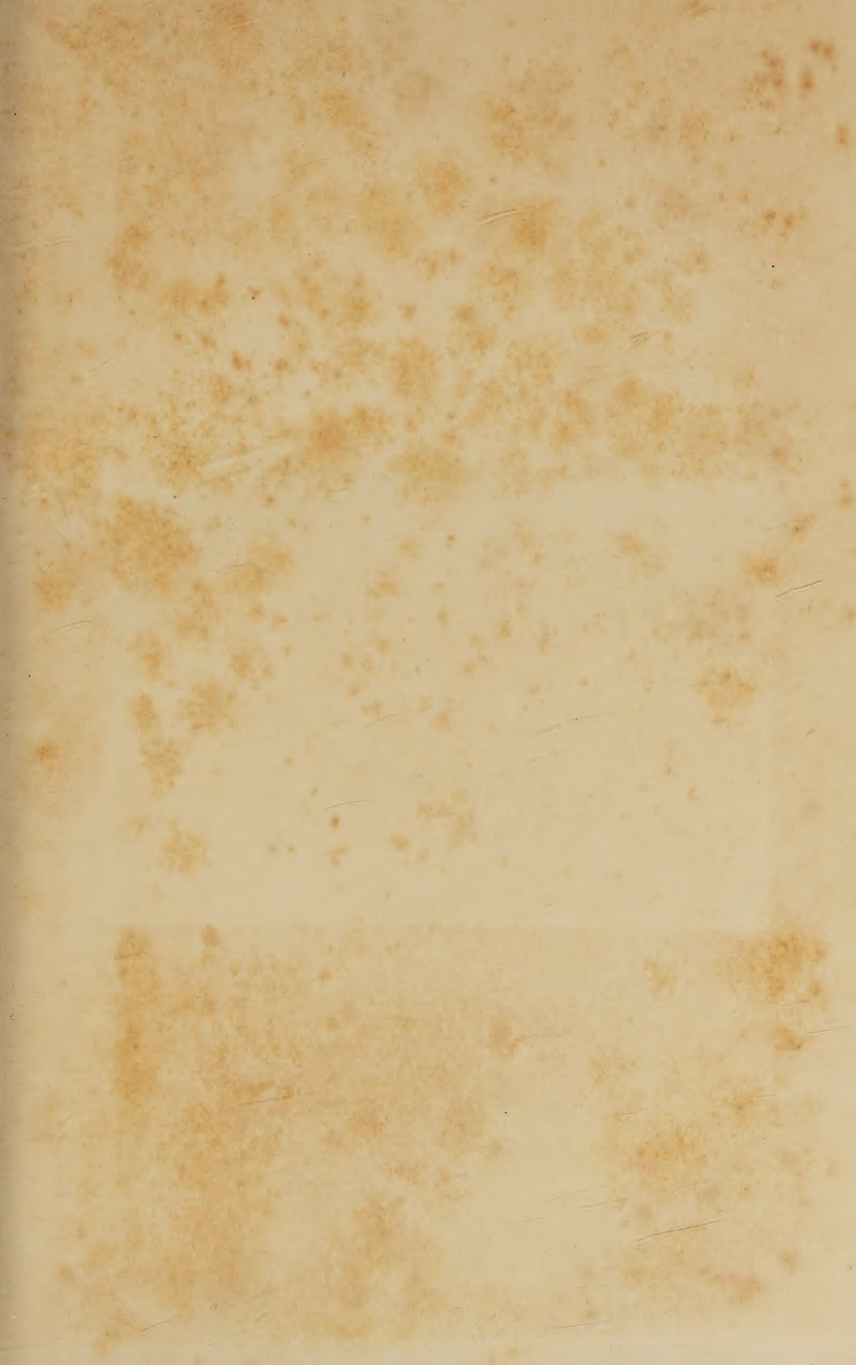
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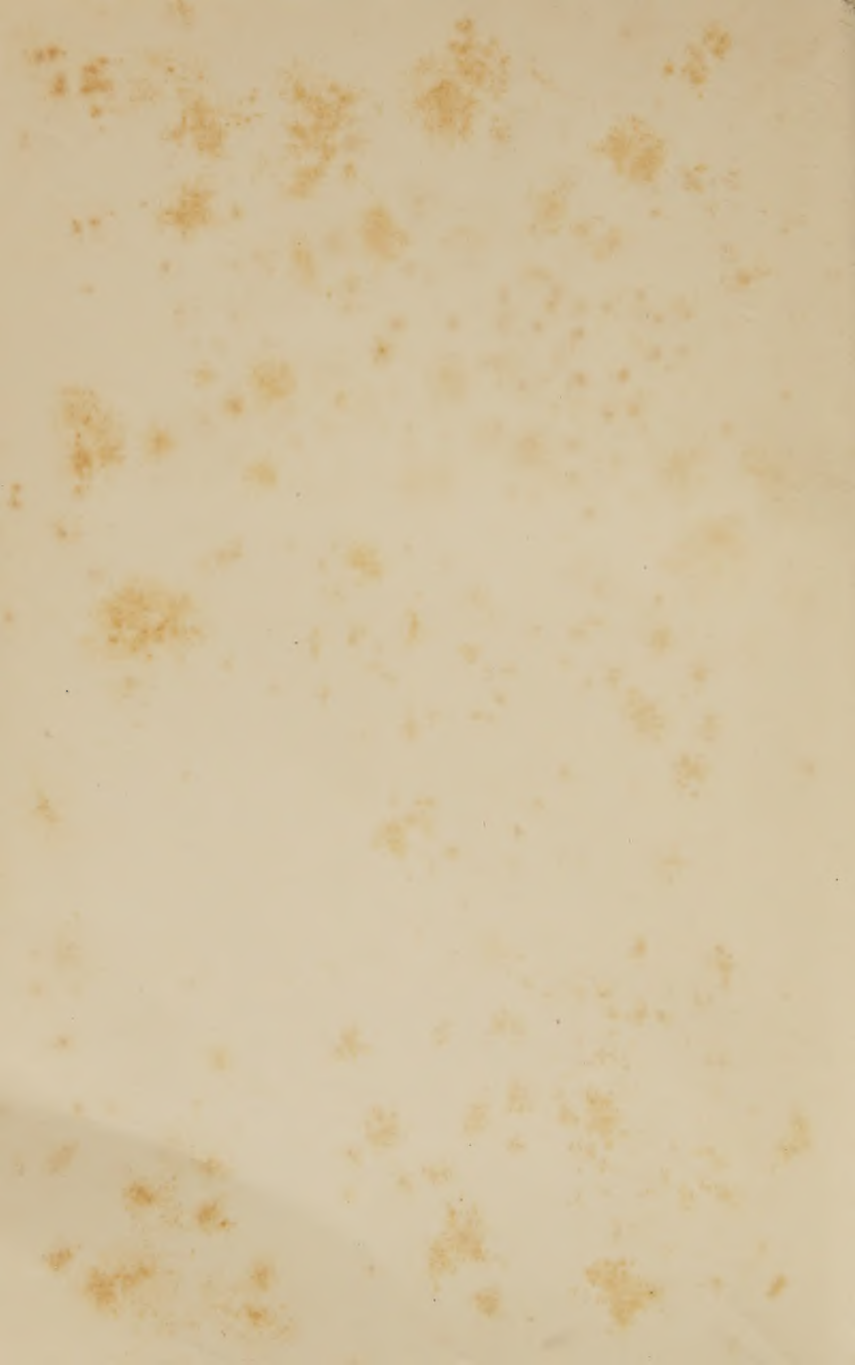














THE HISTORY  
OF  
THE CALIPH VATHEK.  
—  
RASSELAS.

Ballantyne Press  
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EDINBURGH AND LONDON







PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM BECKFORD, ESQ.

WILLIAM BECKFORD

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THE HISTORY

OF THE

CALIPH VATHEK

BY WILLIAM BECKFORD, Esq.

With Preface and Notes, Critical and Explanatory

ALSO

RASSELAS

*PRINCE OF ABYSSINIA*

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

With Four Etchings and Portrait of Beckford by A. D. Courrier  
Etched by Damman

LONDON

J. C. NIMMO AND BAIN

14, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1883





# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

*One thousand copies of this Edition have been printed and the type distributed. No more will be published.*





## PREFACE.



WILLIAM BECKFORD, the author of "Vathek," was born in 1759. He was the son of the well-known Alderman Beckford, Lord Mayor of London, celebrated for having bearded King George III. on his throne, on the occasion of presenting a petition and remonstrance to his Majesty. His son succeeded at the age of ten years to a fortune of upwards of £100,000 per annum, consisting in part of the estate at Fonthill, and a large property in the West Indies. Young Beckford had the advantage of the watchful care of his sponsor, his father's friend, the great Earl of Chatham. The proprietor of Fonthill determined to erect a splendid superstructure which should embody his conceptions of architectural beauty. In this design and other fancies he expended in sixteen years the enormous sum of £273,000. One tower employed 460 men both by day and by night through an entire winter, the torches used by "the nocturnal workmen being visible to the astonished travellers

at miles distant." Fragility was a necessary consequence of such "untempered" haste; and a gale of wind brought the lofty pile to the ground. Mr. Beckford regretted that he had not been present when so grand a ruin occurred; and he ordered the erection of another tower of 276 feet: this also fell in 1825. Beckford purchased an estate at Cintra, that "glorious Eden of the South:" here he built himself a palace for a residence. Lord Byron alludes to this fairy palace and its lord in "Childe Harold," canto i.

Had the philanthropic spirit of Howard, rather than the ignoble idolatry of self, animated the bosom of "England's wealthiest son," he had not been "lone" in heart amid his regal splendour. The happiness then diffused by him would have irradiated his own path, and thousands would have arisen to call him blessed. It is vain for that man to expect peace upon earth who perverts the design of his creation by "living to himself!"

Mr. Beckford possessed a very valuable collection of pictures, books, and curiosities; his knowledge of the fine arts and general accomplishments were of the highest order. In 1822 Fonthill was thrown open to strangers, preparatory to a sale. 7200 catalogues were disposed of at a guinea each. It was, however, sold by private contract (some books, pictures, &c., reserved from the collection) to John

Farquhar, Esq., for £330,000. In the following year the collection was sold by Mr. Philips, occupying thirty-seven days. See works on Fonthill by Britton, Rutter, Storer, &c.; "Historical Notices of Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire," by Mr. Nichols, 4to, 1836; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1844.

In 1783 Mr. Beckford married Lady Margaret Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Aboyne, who died in 1786, leaving issue two daughters, one of whom married Lieutenant-General (then Colonel) James Orde; and the other married Alexander, Duke of Hamilton, Brandon, and Chatelherault. Mr. Beckford was lineally descended from the blood-royal of Scotland, and an "extraordinary accumulation of descents from royal and illustrious houses" concentrated in his person.

We may now consider Mr. Beckford as an author; and here, in his own line, he is entitled to as high a position as he might have justly claimed as a virtuoso. At the age of nineteen he published "Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters," London, sm. 8vo, 1780, a work satirising some English artists under feigned names.

"This volume is an object of curiosity, as it exhibits the germs of some of the finest passages in the subsequent work of the writer—'Vathek.' The description of the imaginary hall in the ark of Noah, in the tale of Andrew Guelph and Og of

Basan, possesses much of the wild sublimity and mysterious interest which characterises the account of the Hall of Eblis; and the touches of playful satire which frequently occur to relieve the sombre character of the narrative, in some parts of 'Vathek,' are not less visible in these Memoirs. We conceive that few persons can read these fictitious biographies, without wishing that the author had oftener favoured the world with his lucubrations. Industry alone seems to have been wanting to have raised him to a level with the greatest novelists of the age.

"They are a series of sharp and brilliant satires on the Dutch and Flemish schools; the language polished and pointed; the sarcasm at once deep and delicate; a performance in which buoyancy of juvenile spirit sets off the results of already extensive observation, and the judgments of a refined (though far too fastidious and exclusive) taste."—*Quarterly Review*.

The celebrated romance of "Vathek" was published in French at Lausanne in 1787. The English edition, issued in 1786, was a translation not made by the author, nor by his consent. Several editions in English have been published. So admirable was the French original for "style and idiom, that it was considered by many as the work of a Frenchman."

Lord Byron, a very competent judge both of the subject and the way in which it should be treated, praises "Vathek" in the highest terms:—

"For correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, this most Eastern and sublime tale surpasses all European imitations; and bears such marks of originality that those who have visited the East will have some



difficulty in believing it to be more than a translation. . . . As an Eastern tale even 'Rasselas' must bow before it : his Happy Valley will not bear a comparison with the Hall of Eblis."

A high authority thus comments upon the noble critic and his subject :—

"'Vathek' is, indeed, without reference to the time of life when the author penned it, a very remarkable performance ; but, like most of the works of the great poet who has thus eloquently praised it, it is stained with some poison-spots ; its inspiration is too often such as might have been inhaled in the Hall of Eblis. We do not allude so much to its audacious licentiousness, as to the diabolical levity of its contempt for mankind. The boy-author appears already to have rubbed all the bloom off his heart ; and, in the midst of his dazzling genius, one trembles to think that a stripling of years so tender should have attained the cool cynicism of a *Candide*."—*Quarterly Review*.

"'Vathek,' the finest of Oriental romances, as 'Lalla Rookh' is the finest of Oriental poems."—*North's Memoir of Beckford*.

In 1834, after lying unpublished (though printed) for near half a century, appeared "Italy, with Sketches of Spain and Portugal, in a Series of Letters written during a Residence in those Countries," London, 2 vols. 8vo.

"Mr. Beckford has at length been induced to publish his Letters, in order to vindicate his own original claim to certain ~~thoughts, images, and expressions, which had been adopted by~~ other authors whom he had from time to time received beneath his roof and indulged with a perusal of his secret lucubrations. . . . His book is entirely unlike any book of Travels in prose that exists in any European language ; and if we could fancy

Lord Byron to have written the 'Harold' in the measure of 'Don Juan,' and to have availed himself of the facilities which the *ottava rima* affords for intermingling high poetry with merri-ment of all sorts, and especially with sarcastic sketches of living manners, we believe the result would have been a work more nearly akin to that now before us than any other in the library. He is a poet, and a great one too, though we know not that he ever wrote a line of verse. His raptures amidst the sublime scenery of mountains and forests, in the Tyrol, especially, and in Spain, is that of a spirit cast originally in one of Nature's finest moulds ; and he fixes it in language which can scarcely be praised beyond its deserts—simple, massive, nervous, apparently little laboured, yet revealing, in its effect, the perfection of art. Some immortal passages in Gray's letters, and Byron's diaries, are the only things, in our tongue, that seem to us to come near the profound melancholy, blended with a picturesque description at once true and startling, of many of these extraordinary pages. Nor is his sense for the highest beauties of art less exquisite. He seems to us to describe classical architecture, and the pictures of the great Italian schools, with a most passionate feeling of the grand, and with an inimitable grace of expression. On the other hand, he betrays in a thousand places a settled voluptuousness of temperament, and a capricious recklessness of self-indulgence, which will lead the world to identify him henceforth with his 'Vathek' as inextricably as it has long since connected 'Harold' with the poet that drew him. . . . We risk nothing in predicting that Mr. Beckford's Travels will henceforth be classed among the most elegant productions of modern literature : they will be forthwith translated into every language on the Continent—and will keep his name alive centuries after all the brass and marble he ever piled together ~~ceased to vibrate~~ *ceased to vibrate* with the echoes of Modenas."—*Quarterly Review*, li. 426.

Another authority of great reputation, which has guillotined as many unhappy authors in a lustre or

two past as did the *Edinburgh Review* in the first twenty years of its "destructive ravages," thus commends the book under our notice :—

"A work rich in scenes of beauty and of life. It is a prose poem. The writer was a young enthusiast, with a passionate love of the ideal and the spiritual, whether in art or nature : travelling had little to do with the work but to call forth feeling ; in proof, it was written fifty years ago, yet, though the road has since been travelled by others to utter weariness, it is as fresh and delightful as if the ink were not dry with which it was written. There are scenes in these volumes not to be excelled in modern poetry ; pictures where words are as rich in colour and in beauty as the pencil of Turner : the rest is but the connecting link which holds them together. We are not sure that all will agree in this judgment ; but the work will assuredly 'fit audience find,' and take a permanent rank in our libraries. . . . In the account of Portugal there is everywhere the same vivid picturing, the same rich colouring, the same passion and power ; but instead of scenes from inanimate nature, we have them from life. . . . Our extracts, with the exception of those relating to Venice, have been taken almost at random, so rich is the work in scenes of beauty and of life."—*Athenæum*, 1834.

Mr. Beckford has connected his name still more closely with Portugal, by his "Recollections of an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alcobaca and Batalha," published in 1835. The excursion was made in June, 1794, at the desire of the Prince Regent of Portugal.

"The monastery of Alcobaca was the grandest ecclesiastical edifice in that country, with paintings, antique tombs, and foun-

tains; the noblest architecture, in the finest situation, and inhabited by monks who lived like princes. The whole of these sketches are interesting, and present a gorgeous picture of ecclesiastical pomp and wealth.”—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

The travellers were “conducted to the kitchen by the abbot, in his costume of High Almoner of Portugal, that they might see what preparations had been made to regale them.”

“Through the centre of the immense and nobly-groined hall, not less than sixty feet in diameter, ran a brisk rivulet of the clearest water, containing every sort and size of the finest river fish. On one side, loads of game and venison were heaped up. On the other, vegetables and fruits, in endless variety. Beyond a long line of stoves, extended a row of ovens, and close to them hillocks of wheaten flour whiter than snow, rocks of sugar, jars of the purest oil, and pastry in vast abundance, which a numerous tribe of lay brothers and their attendants were rolling out, and puffing up into a hundred different shapes, singing all the while as blithely as larks in a corn field.”

This magnificent monastery was plundered and given to the flames by the French troops under Massena, in 1811—one of the many sacrifices to the boundless ambition of one of the smallest and greatest men who has ever disgraced the annals of humanity—Napoleon Bonaparte! Small in his narrow-minded selfishness, great in an intellect perverted to the worst purposes, and ever memorable as one of the most remorseless and unscrupulous wretches who ever trod the earth for the punishment of the nations.



We have only room for one opinion upon the Recollections:

“Pleasing and picturesque as the clime and places visited, this is just a book for the indulgence of the *dolce far niente*; and our readers can hardly take a more grateful literary companion with them to the couch or grove. Again we have to express the pleasure which this volume has afforded us, and recommend it to the favour it so richly merits; for, though of slight texture, it is a very charming production.”—*Literary Gazette*.



## PREFACE TO THE THIRD FRENCH EDITION.



LES éditions de Paris et de Lausanne, étant devenu extrêmement rares, j'ai consenti enfin à ce que l'on republiât à Londres ce petit ouvrage tel que je l'ai composé.

La traduction, comme on sçait, a paru avant l'original; il est fort aisé de croire que ce n'étoit pas mon intention—des circonstances, peu intéressantes pour le public, en ont été la cause.

J'ai préparé quelques Episodes; ils sont indiqués à la page 200,\* comme faisant suite à Vathek—peut-être paraîtront-ils un jour.

W. BECKFORD.

1 *Juin*, 1815.

\* These are the History of the two friendly Princes Alasi and Firouz, shut up in the Palace of Subterranean Fire.

History of Prince Backiarohk, imprisoned in the Palace of Subterranean Fire.

History of Prince Kahlah, and of the Princess Zulkais, shut up in the Palace of Subterranean Fire.



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST ENGLISH EDITION.



THE original of the following story, with some others of a similar kind, collected in the East by a man of letters, was communicated to the Editor above three years ago. The pleasure he received from the perusal of it induced him at that time to translate it. How far the copy may be a just representation, it becomes not him to determine. He presumes, however, to hope that, if the difficulty of accommodating our English idioms to the Arabic, preserving the correspondent tones of a diversified narration, and discriminating the nicer touches of character through the shades of foreign manners, be duly considered, a failure in some points will not preclude him from all claim to indulgence, especially if those images, sentiments, and passions, which, being independent of local peculiarities, may be expressed in every language, shall be found to retain their native energy in our own.





THE HISTORY  
OF  
THE CALIPH VATHEK.



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VATHEK, ninth Caliph of the race of the Abassides, was the son of Motassem, and the grandson of Haroun Al Raschid. From an early accession to the throne, and the talents he possessed to adorn it, his subjects were induced to expect that his reign would be long and happy. His figure was pleasing and majestic; but when he was angry one of his eyes became so terrible, that no person could bear to behold it, and the wretch upon whom it was fixed instantly fell backward, and sometimes expired. For fear, however, of depopulating his dominions and making his palace desolate, he but rarely gave way to his anger.

Being much addicted to women and the pleasures of the table, he sought by his affability to procure agreeable companions; and he succeeded the better as his generosity was unbounded, and his indulgences unrestrained, for he was by no means scrupulous, nor did he think with the Caliph Omar Ben Abdalaziz,

that it was necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy Paradise in the next.

He surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors. The palace of Alkoremme, which his father Motassem had erected on the hill of Pied Horses, and which commanded the whole city of Samarah, was in his idea far too scanty; he added, therefore, five wings, or rather other palaces, which he destined for the particular gratification of each of his senses.

In the first of these were tables continually covered with the most exquisite dainties, which were supplied both by night and by day according to their constant consumption, whilst the most delicious wines and the choicest cordials flowed forth from a hundred fountains that were never exhausted. This palace was called, "The Eternal or Unsatiating Banquet."

The second was styled "The Temple of Melody, or the Nectar of the Soul." It was inhabited by the most skilful musicians and admired poets of the time, who not only displayed their talents within, but dispersing in bands without, caused every surrounding scene to reverberate their songs, which were continually varied in the most delightful succession.

The palace named "The Delight of the Eyes, or the Support of Memory," was one entire enchantment. Rarities collected from every corner of the earth were there found in such profusion as to dazzle and confound, but for the order in which they were arranged. One gallery exhibited the pictures of the celebrated Mani, and statues that seemed to be alive. Here a well-managed perspective attracted the sight, there the magic of optics agreeably de-



ceived it; whilst the naturalist on his part exhibited, in their several classes, the various gifts that Heaven had bestowed on our globe. In a word, Vathek omitted nothing in this palace that might gratify the curiosity of those who resorted to it, although he was not able to satisfy his own, for he was of all men the most curious.

“The Palace of Perfumes,” which was termed likewise “The Incentive to Pleasure,” consisted of various halls where the different perfumes which the earth produces were kept perpetually burning in censers of gold. Flambeaux and aromatic lamps were here lighted in open day. But the too powerful effects of this agreeable delirium might be avoided by descending into an immense garden, where an assemblage of every fragrant flower diffused through the air the purest odours.

The fifth palace, denominated “The Retreat of Joy, or the Dangerous,” was frequented by troops of young females, beautiful as the houris and not less seducing, who never failed to receive with caresses all whom the Caliph allowed to approach them; for he was by no means disposed to be jealous, as his own women were secluded within the palace he inhabited himself.

Notwithstanding the sensuality in which Vathek indulged, he experienced no abatement in the love of his people, who thought that a sovereign immersed in pleasure was not less tolerable to his subjects than one that employed himself in creating them foes. But the unquiet and impetuous disposition of the Caliph would not allow him to rest there; he had

studied so much for his amusement in the lifetime of his father, as to acquire a great deal of knowledge, though not a sufficiency to satisfy himself; for he wished to know everything, even sciences that did not exist. He was fond of engaging in disputes with the learned, but liked them not to push their opposition with warmth; he stopped the mouths of those with presents whose mouths could be stopped, whilst others, whom his liberality was unable to subdue, he sent to prison to cool their blood; a remedy that often succeeded.

Vathek discovered also a predilection for theological controversy, but it was not with the orthodox that he usually held. By this means he induced the zealots to oppose him, and then persecuted them in return; for he resolved at any rate to have reason on his side.

The great prophet Mahomet, whose vicars the caliphs are, beheld with indignation from his abode in the seventh heaven the irreligious conduct of such a vicegerent. "Let us leave him to himself," said he to the genii, who are always ready to receive his commands; "let us see to what lengths his folly and impiety will carry him; if he run into excess we shall know how to chastise him. Assist him, therefore, to complete the tower which, in imitation of Nimrod, he hath begun, not, like that great warrior, to escape being drowned, but from the insolent curiosity of penetrating the secrets of Heaven; he will not divine the fate that awaits him."

The Genii obeyed, and when the workmen had raised their structure a cubit in the daytime, two

cubits more were added in the night. The expedition with which the fabric arose was not a little flattering to the vanity of Vathek. He fancied that even insensible matter showed a forwardness to subserve his designs, not considering that the successes of the foolish and wicked form the first rod of their chastisement.

His pride arrived at its height when, having ascended for the first time the eleven thousand stairs of his tower, he cast his eyes below and beheld men not larger than pismires, mountains than shells, and cities than bee-hives. The idea which such an elevation inspired of his own grandeur completely bewildered him; he was almost ready to adore himself till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars as high above him as they appeared when he stood on the surface of the earth. He consoled himself, however, for this transient perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others, and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach of his sight, and transfer to the stars the decrees of his destiny.

With this view the inquisitive prince passed most of his nights on the summit of his tower, till he became an adept in the mysteries of astrology, and imagined that the planets had disclosed to him the most marvellous adventures, which were to be accomplished by an extraordinary personage from a country altogether unknown. Prompted by motives of curiosity he had always been courteous to strangers, but from this instant he redoubled his attention, and ordered it to be announced by sound

of trumpet, through all the streets of Samarah, that no one of his subjects, on peril of displeasure, should either lodge or detain a traveller, but forthwith bring him to the palace.

Not long after this proclamation there arrived in his metropolis a man so hideous, that the very guards who arrested him were forced to shut their eyes as they led him along. The Caliph himself appeared startled at so horrible a visage, but joy succeeded to this emotion of terror when the stranger displayed to his view such rarities as he had never before seen, and of which he had no conception.

In reality nothing was ever so extraordinary as the merchandise this stranger produced ; most of his curiosities, which were not less admirable for their workmanship than splendour, had, besides, their several virtues described on a parchment fastened to each. There were slippers which enabled the feet to walk ; knives that cut without the motion of a hand ; sabres which dealt the blow at the person they were wished to strike, and the whole enriched with gems that were hitherto unknown.

The sabres, whose blades emitted a dazzling radiance, fixed more than all the Caliph's attention, who promised himself to decipher at his leisure the uncouth characters engraven on their sides. Without, therefore, demanding their price, he ordered all the coined gold to be brought from his treasury, and commanded the merchant to take what he pleased ; the stranger complied with modesty and silence.

Vathek, imagining that the merchant's taciturnity

was occasioned by the awe which his presence inspired, encouraged him to advance, and asked him, with an air of condescension, "Who he was? whence he came? and where he obtained such beautiful commodities?" The man, or rather monster, instead of making a reply, thrice rubbed his forehead, which, as well as his body, was blacker than ebony, four times clapped his paunch, the projection of which was enormous, opened wide his huge eyes which glowed like firebrands, began to laugh with a hideous noise, and discovered his long amber-coloured teeth bestreaked with green.

The Caliph, though a little startled, renewed his inquiries, but without being able to procure a reply; at which, beginning to be ruffled, he exclaimed: "Knowest thou, varlet, who I am? and at whom thou art aiming thy gibes?" Then, addressing his guards, "Have ye heard him speak? is he dumb?"

"He hath spoken," they replied, "though but little."

"Let him speak again then," said Vathek, "and tell me who he is, from whence he came, and where he procured these singular curiosities, or I swear by the ass of Balaam that I will make him rue his pertinacity."

The menace was accompanied by the Caliph with one of his angry and perilous glances, which the stranger sustained without the slightest emotion, although his eyes were fixed on the terrible eye of the Prince.

No words can describe the amazement of the courtiers when they beheld this rude merchant withstand

the encounter unshocked. They all fell prostrate with their faces on the ground to avoid the risk of their lives, and continued in the same abject posture till the Caliph exclaimed in a furious tone: "Up, cowards! seize the miscreant! see that he be committed to prison and guarded by the best of my soldiers! Let him, however, retain the money I gave him, it is not my intent to take from him his property, I only want him to speak."

No sooner had he uttered these words than the stranger was surrounded, pinioned with strong fetters, and hurried away to the prison of the great tower, which was encompassed by seven empalements of iron bars, and armed with spikes in every direction longer and sharper than spits.

The Caliph, nevertheless, remained in the most violent agitation; he sat down indeed to eat, but of the three hundred covers that were daily placed before him could taste of no more than thirty-two. A diet to which he had been so little accustomed was sufficient of itself to prevent him from sleeping; what then must be its effect when joined to the anxiety that preyed upon his spirits? At the first glimpse of dawn he hastened to the prison, again to importune this intractable stranger; but the rage of Vathek exceeded all bounds on finding the prison empty, the grates burst asunder, and his guards lying lifeless around him. In the paroxysm of his passion he fell furiously on the poor carcasses, and kicked them till evening without intermission. His courtiers and viziers exerted their efforts to soothe his extravagance, but finding every expedient ineffectual, they all united



in one vociferation: "The Caliph is gone mad! the Caliph is out of his senses!"

This outcry, which soon resounded through the streets of Samarah, at length reaching the ears of Carathis his mother, she flew in the utmost consternation to try her ascendancy on the mind of her son. Her tears and caresses called off his attention, and he was prevailed upon by her entreaties to be brought back to the palace.

Carathis, apprehensive of leaving Vathek to himself, caused him to be put to bed, and seating herself by him, endeavoured by her conversation to heal and compose him. Nor could any one have attempted it with better success, for the Caliph not only loved her as a mother, but respected her as a person of superior genius; it was she who had induced him, being a Greek herself, to adopt all the sciences and systems of her country, which good Mussulmans hold in such thorough abhorrence. Judicial astrology was one of those systems in which Carathis was a perfect adept; she began therefore with reminding her son of the promise which the stars had made him, and intimated an intention of consulting them again.

"Alas!" sighed the Caliph, as soon as he could speak, "what a fool have I been! not for the kicks bestowed on my guards who so tamely submitted to death, but for never considering that this extraordinary man was the same the planets had foretold, whom, instead of ill-treating, I should have conciliated by all the arts of persuasion."

"The past," said Catharis, "cannot be recalled,

but it behoves us to think of the future; perhaps you may again see the object you so much regret; it is possible the inscriptions on the sabres will afford information. Eat, therefore, and take thy repose, my dear son; we will consider, to-morrow, in what manner to act."

Vathek yielded to her counsel as well as he could, and arose in the morning with a mind more at ease. The sabres he commanded to be instantly brought, and poring upon them through a green glass, that their glittering might not dazzle, he set himself in earnest to decipher the inscriptions; but his reiterated attempts were all of them nugatory; in vain did he beat his head and bite his nails, not a letter of the whole was he able to ascertain. So unlucky a disappointment would have undone him again, had not Carathis by good fortune entered the apartment.

"Have patience, son!" said she; "you certainly are possessed of every important science, but the knowledge of languages is a trifle at best, and the accomplishment of none but a pedant. Issue forth a proclamation that you will confer such rewards as become your greatness upon any one that shall interpret what you do not understand, and what it is beneath you to learn, you will soon find your curiosity gratified."

"That may be," said the Caliph; "but in the meantime I shall be horribly disgusted by a crowd of smatterers, who will come to the trial as much for the pleasure of retailing their jargon as from the hope of gaining the reward. To avoid this evil, it will be proper to add that I will put every candidate

to death who shall fail to give satisfaction ; for, thank Heaven ! I have skill enough to distinguish between one that translates and one that invents."

"Of that I have no doubt," replied Carathis ; "but to put the ignorant to death is somewhat severe, and may be productive of dangerous effects ; content yourself with commanding their beards to be burnt,—beards in a state are not quite so essential as men."

The Caliph submitted to the reasons of his mother, and sending for Morakanabad, his prime vizier, said : "Let the common criers proclaim, not only in Samarah, but throughout every city in my empire, that whosoever will repair hither and decipher certain characters which appear to be inexplicable, shall experience the liberality for which I am renowned ; but that all who fail upon trial shall have their beards burnt off to the last hair. Let them add also that I will bestow fifty beautiful slaves, and as many jars of apricots from the isle of Kirmith, upon any man that shall bring me intelligence of the stranger."

The subjects of the Caliph, like their sovereign, being great admirers of women and apricots from Kirmith, felt their mouths water at these promises, but were totally unable to gratify their hankering, for no one knew which way the stranger had gone.

As to the Caliph's other requisition, the result was different. The learned, the half-learned, and those who were neither, but fancied themselves equal to both, came boldly to hazard their beards, and all shamefully lost them.

The exaction of these forfeitures, which found sufficient employment for the eunuchs, gave them

such a smell of singed hair as greatly to disgust the ladies of the seraglio, and make it necessary that this new occupation of their guardians should be transferred into other hands.

At length, however, an old man presented himself whose beard was a cubit and a half longer than any that had appeared before him. The officers of the palace whispered to each other, as they ushered him in, "What a pity such a beard should be burnt!" Even the Caliph, when he saw it, concurred with them in opinion, but his concern was entirely needless. This venerable personage read the characters with facility, and explained them verbatim as follows: "We were made where everything good is made; we are the least of the wonders of a place where all is wonderful, and deserving the sight of the first potentate on earth."

"You translate admirably!" cried Vathek; "I know to what these marvellous characters allude. Let him receive as many robes of honour and thousands of sequins of gold, as he hath spoken words. I am in some measure relieved from the perplexity that embarrassed me!"

Vathek invited the old man to dine, and even to remain some days in the palace. Unluckily for him he accepted the offer; for the Caliph, having ordered him next morning to be called, said: "Read again to me what you have read already; I cannot hear too often the promise that is made me, the completion of which I languish to obtain."

The old man forthwith put on his green spectacles, but they instantly dropped from his nose on perceiv-

ing that the characters he had read the day preceding had given place to others of different import.

"What ails you?" asked the Caliph; "and why these symptoms of wonder?"

"Sovereign of the world," replied the old man, "these sabres hold another language to-day from that they yesterday held."

"How say you?" returned Vathek—"but it matters not! tell me, if you can, what they mean."

"It is this, my lord," rejoined the old man: "Woe to the rash mortal who seeks to know that of which he should remain ignorant, and to undertake that which surpasseth his power!"

"And woe to thee!" cried the Caliph, in a burst of indignation; "to-day thou art void of understanding; begone from my presence, they shall burn but the half of thy beard, because thou wert yesterday fortunate in guessing;—my gifts I never resume."

The old man, wise enough to perceive he had luckily escaped, considering the folly of disclosing so disgusting a truth, immediately withdrew and appeared not again.

But it was not long before Vathek discovered abundant reason to regret his precipitation; for though he could not decipher the characters himself, yet by constantly poring upon them he plainly perceived that they every day changed, and unfortunately no other candidate offered to explain them. This perplexing occupation inflamed his blood, dazzled his sight, and brought on a giddiness and debility that he could not support. He failed not, however, though in so reduced a condition, to be

often carried to his tower, as he flattered himself that he might there read in the stars which he went to consult something more congenial to his wishes : but in this his hopes were deluded ; for his eyes, dimmed by the vapours of his head, began to subserve his curiosity so ill, that he beheld nothing but a thick dun cloud, which he took for the most direful of omens.

Agitated with so much anxiety, Vathek entirely lost all firmness ; a fever seized him, and his appetite failed. Instead of being one of the greatest eaters he became as distinguished for drinking. So insatiable was the thirst which tormented him, that his mouth, like a funnel, was always open to receive the various liquors that might be poured into it, and especially cold water, which calmed him more than every other.

This unhappy prince being thus incapacitated for the enjoyment of any pleasure, commanded the palaces of the five senses to be shut up, forbore to appear in public, either to display his magnificence or administer justice, and retired to the inmost apartment of his harem. As he had ever been an indulgent husband, his wives, overwhelmed with grief at his deplorable situation, incessantly offered their prayers for his health and unremittingly supplied him with water.

In the meantime the Princess Carathis, whose affliction no words can describe, instead of restraining herself to sobbing and tears, was closeted daily with the Vizier Morakanabad to find out some cure or mitigation of the Caliph's disease. Under the persuasion that it was caused by enchantment, they turned over



together, leaf by leaf, all the books of magic that might point out a remedy, and caused the horrible stranger, whom they accused as the enchanter, to be everywhere sought for with the strictest diligence.

At the distance of a few miles from Samarah stood a high mountain, whose sides were swarded with wild thyme and basil, and its summit overspread with so delightful a plain, that it might be taken for the paradise destined for the faithful. Upon it grew a hundred thickets of eglantine and other fragrant shrubs, a hundred arbours of roses, jessamine and honeysuckle, as many clumps of orange trees, cedar and citron, whose branches, interwoven with the palm, the pomegranate, and the vine, presented every luxury that could regale the eye or the taste. The ground was strewed with violets, hare-bells, and pansies, in the midst of which sprung forth tufts of jonquils, hyacinths and carnations, with every other perfume that impregnates the air. Four fountains, not less clear than deep, and so abundant as to slake the thirst of ten armies, seemed profusely placed here to make the scene more resemble the garden of Eden, which was watered by the four sacred rivers. Here the nightingale sang the birth of the rose, her well-beloved, and at the same time lamented its short-lived beauty; whilst the turtle deplored the loss of more substantial pleasures, and the wakeful lark hailed the rising light that reanimates the whole creation. Here more than anywhere the mingled melodies of birds expressed the various passions they inspired, as if the exquisite fruits which they pecked at pleasure had given them a double energy.

To this mountain Vathek was sometimes brought for the sake of breathing a purer air, and especially to drink at will of the four fountains, which were reputed in the highest degree salubrious and sacred to himself. His attendants were his mother, his wives, and some eunuchs, who assiduously employed themselves in filling capacious bowls of rock crystal, and emulously presenting them to him; but it frequently happened that his avidity exceeded their zeal, insomuch that he would prostrate himself upon the ground to lap up the water, of which he could never have enough.

One day when this unhappy prince had been long lying in so debasing a posture, a voice, hoarse but strong, thus addressed him: "Why assumest thou the function of a dog, O Caliph! so proud of thy dignity and power?"

At this apostrophe he raised his head and beheld the stranger that had caused him so much affliction. Inflamed with anger at the sight, he exclaimed:

"Accursed Giaour! what comest thou hither to do? is it not enough to have transformed a prince remarkable for his agility into one of those leather barrels which the Bedouin Arabs carry on their camels when they traverse the deserts? Perceivest thou not that I may perish by drinking to excess no less than by a total abstinence?"

"Drink then this draught," said the stranger, as he presented to him a phial of a red and yellow mixture; "and to satiate the thirst of thy soul as well as of thy body, know that I am an Indian, but from a region of India which is wholly unknown."

The Caliph, delighted to see his desires accomplished in part, and flattering himself with the hope of obtaining their entire fulfilment, without a moment's hesitation swallowed the potion, and instantaneously found his health restored, his thirst appeased, and his limbs as agile as ever.

In the transports of his joy Vathek leaped upon the neck of the frightful Indian, and kissed his horrid mouth and hollow cheeks as though they had been the coral lips, and the lilies and roses of his most beautiful wives; whilst they, less terrified than jealous at the sight, dropped their veils to hide the blush of mortification that suffused their foreheads.

Nor would the scene have closed here, had not Carathis, with all the art of insinuation, a little repressed the raptures of her son. Having prevailed upon him to return to Samarah, she caused a herald to precede him, whom she commanded to proclaim as loudly as possible: "The wonderful stranger hath appeared again, he hath healed the Caliph, he hath spoken! he hath spoken!"

Forthwith all the inhabitants of this vast city quitted their habitations, and ran together in crowds to see the procession of Vathek and the Indian, whom they now blessed as much as they had before execrated, incessantly shouting: "He hath healed our sovereign, he hath spoken! he hath spoken!" Nor were these words forgotten in the public festivals which were celebrated the same evening, to testify the general joy; for the poets applied them as a chorus to all the songs they composed.

The Caliph in the meanwhile caused the palaces

of the senses to be again set open; and as he found himself prompted to visit that of taste in preference to the rest, immediately ordered a splendid entertainment, to which his great officers and favourite courtiers were all invited. The Indian, who was placed near the prince, seemed to think that as a proper acknowledgment of so distinguished a privilege he could neither eat, drink, nor talk too much. The various dainties were no sooner served up than they vanished, to the great mortification of Vathek, who piqued himself on being the greatest eater alive, and at this time in particular had an excellent appetite.

The rest of the company looked round at each other in amazement; but the Indian, without appearing to observe it, quaffed large bumpers to the health of each of them, sung in a style altogether extravagant, related stories at which he laughed immoderately, and poured forth extemporaneous verses, which would not have been thought bad but for the strange grimaces with which they were uttered. In a word, his loquacity was equal to that of a hundred astrologers, he ate as much as a hundred porters, and caroused in proportion.

The Caliph, notwithstanding the table had been thirty times covered, found himself incommoded by the voraciousness of his guest, who was now considerably declined in the prince's esteem. Vathek, however, being unwilling to betray the chagrin he could hardly disguise, said in a whisper to Baba-balouk, the chief of his eunuchs: "You see how enormous his performances in every way are, what would be the consequence should he get at my

wives? Go! redouble your vigilance, and be sure look well to my Circassians, who would be more to his taste than all of the rest."

The bird of the morning had thrice renewed his song when the hour of the Divan sounded. Vathek, in gratitude to his subjects having promised to attend, immediately arose from table and repaired thither, leaning upon his vizier, who could scarcely support him, so disordered was the poor prince by the wine he had drunk, and still more by the extravagant vagaries of his boisterous guest.

The viziers, the officers of the crown and of the law, arranged themselves in a semicircle about their sovereign and preserved a respectful silence, whilst the Indian, who looked as cool as if come from a fast, sat down without ceremony on the step of the throne, laughing in his sleeve at the indignation with which his temerity had filled the spectators.

The Caliph, however, whose ideas were confused and his head embarrassed, went on administering justice at hap-hazard, till at length the prime vizier, perceiving his situation, hit upon a sudden expedient to interrupt the audience and rescue the honour of his master, to whom he said in a whisper: "My Lord, the Princess Carathis, who hath passed the night in consulting the planets, informs you that they portend you evil, and the danger is urgent. Beware lest this stranger, whom you have so lavishly recompensed for his magical gewgaws, should make some attempt on your life; his liquor, which at first had the appearance of effecting your cure, may be no more than a poison of a sudden operation. Slight

not this surmise, ask him at least of what it was compounded, whence he procured it, and mention the sabres which you seem to have forgotten.

Vathek, to whom the insolent airs of the stranger became every moment less supportable, intimated to his vizier by a wink of acquiescence that he would adopt his advice, and at once turning towards the Indian said: "Get up, and declare in full Divan of what drugs the liquor was compounded you enjoined me to take, for it is suspected to be poison; add also the explanation I have so earnestly desired concerning the sabres you sold me, and thus show your gratitude for the favours heaped on you."

Having pronounced these words in as moderate a tone as a caliph well could, he waited in silent expectation for an answer. But the Indian, still keeping his seat, began to renew his loud shouts of laughter, and exhibit the same horrid grimaces he had shown them before, without vouchsafing a word in reply. Vathek, no longer able to brook such insolence, immediately kicked him from the steps; instantly descending, repeated his blow, and persisted with such assiduity as incited all who were present to follow his example. Every foot was aimed at the Indian, and no sooner had any one given him a kick than he felt himself constrained to reiterate the stroke.

The stranger afforded them no small entertainment; for, being both short and plump, he collected himself into a ball, and rolled round on all sides at the blows of his assailants, who pressed after him wherever he turned with an eagerness beyond con-



ception, whilst their numbers were every moment increasing. The ball indeed, in passing from one apartment to another, drew every person after it that came in its way, insomuch that the whole palace was thrown into confusion, and resounded with a tremendous clamour. The women of the harem, amazed at the uproar, flew to their blinds to discover the cause; but no sooner did they catch a glimpse of the ball than, feeling themselves unable to refrain, they broke from the clutches of their eunuchs, who to stop their flight pinched them till they bled, but in vain; whilst themselves, though trembling with terror at the escape of their charge, were as incapable of resisting the attraction.

The Indian, after having traversed the halls, galleries, chambers, kitchens, gardens, and stables of the palace, at last took his course through the courts; whilst the Caliph, pursuing him closer than the rest, bestowed as many kicks as he possibly could, yet, not without receiving now and then one, which his competitors in their eagerness designed for the ball.

Carathis, Morakanabad, and two or three old viziers, whose wisdom had hitherto withstood the attraction, wishing to prevent Vathek from exposing himself in the presence of his subjects, fell down in his way to impede the pursuit; but he, regardless of their obstruction, leaped over their heads and went on as before. They then ordered the Muezens to call the people to prayers, both for the sake of getting them out of the way, and of endeavouring by their petitions to avert the calamity; but neither of these expedients was a whit more successful; the sight of this fatal ball

was alone sufficient to draw after it every beholder. The Muezens themselves, though they saw it but at a distance, hastened down from their minarets and mixed with the crowd, which continued to increase in so surprising a manner, that scarce an inhabitant was left in Samarah, except the aged, the sick confined to their beds, and infants at the breast, whose nurses could run more nimbly without them. Even Carathis, Morakanabad, and the rest were all become of the party.

The shrill screams of the females, who had broken from their apartments and were unable to extricate themselves from the pressure of the crowd, together with those of the eunuchs jostling after them, terrified lest their charge should escape from their sight, increased by the execrations of husbands urging forward and menacing both, kicks given and received, stumblings and overthrows at every step; in a word, the confusion that universally prevailed rendered Samarah like a city taken by storm and devoted to absolute plunder.

At last the cursed Indian, who still preserved his rotundity of figure, after passing through all the streets and public places, and leaving them empty, rolled onwards to the plain of Catoul, and traversed the valley at the foot of the mountain of the Four Fountains.

As a continual fall of water had excavated an immense gulf in the valley, whose opposite side was closed in by a steep acclivity, the Caliph and his attendants were apprehensive lest the ball should bound into the chasm, and, to prevent it, redoubled

their efforts, but in vain. The Indian persevered in his onward direction, and as had been apprehended, glancing from the precipice, with the rapidity of lightning was lost in the gulf below.

Vathek would have followed the perfidious Giaour, had not an invisible agency arrested his progress. The multitude that pressed after him were at once checked in the same manner, and a calm instantaneously ensued. They all gazed at each other with an air of astonishment; and notwithstanding that the loss of veils and turbans, together with torn habits and dust blended with sweat, presented a most laughable spectacle, there was not one smile to be seen; on the contrary, all, with looks of confusion and sadness, returned in silence to Samarah and retired to their inmost apartments, without ever reflecting that they had been impelled by an invisible power into the extravagance for which they reproached themselves; for it is but just that men, who so often arrogate to their own merit the good of which they are but instruments, should attribute to themselves the absurdities which they could not prevent.

The Caliph was the only person that refused to leave the valley. He commanded his tents to be pitched there, and stationed himself on the very edge of the precipice, in spite of the representations of Carathis and Morakanabad, who pointed out the hazard of its brink giving way, and the vicinity to the Magician that had so severely tormented him. Vathek derided all their remonstrances, and having ordered a thousand flambeaux to be lighted, and directed his attendants to proceed in lighting more,

lay down on the slippery margin, and attempted, by help of this artificial splendour, to look through that gloom which all the fires of the empyrean had been insufficient to pervade. Onewhile he fancied to himself voices arising from the depths of the gulf; at another he seemed to distinguish the accents of the Indian, but all was no more than the hollow murmur of waters, and the din of the cataracts that rushed from steep to steep down the sides of the mountain.

Having passed the night in this cruel perturbation, the Caliph at daybreak retired to his tent, where, without taking the least sustenance, he continued to doze till the dusk of evening began again to come on. He then resumed his vigils as before, and persevered in observing them for many nights together. At length, fatigued with so successless an employment, he sought relief from change. To this end he sometimes paced with hasty strides across the plain, and as he wildly gazed at the stars, reproached them with having deceived him; but lo! on a sudden the clear blue sky appeared streaked over with streams of blood, which reached from the valley even to the city of Samarah. As this awful phenomenon seemed to touch his tower, Vathek at first thought of repairing thither to view it more distinctly, but feeling himself unable to advance, and being overcome with apprehension, he muffled up his face in his robe.

Terrifying as these prodigies were, this impression upon him was no more than momentary, and served only to stimulate his love of the marvellous. Instead therefore of returning to his palace, he persisted in the resolution of abiding where the Indian vanished

from his view. One night, however, while he was walking as usual on the plain, the moon and the stars at once were eclipsed, and a total darkness ensued: the earth trembled beneath him, and a voice came forth, the voice of the Giaour, who, in accents more sonorous than thunder, thus addressed him: "Wouldest thou devote thyself to me? Adore then the terrestrial influences, and abjure Mahomet. On these conditions I will bring thee to the palace of subterranean fire; there shalt thou behold in immense depositories the treasures which the stars have promised thee, and which will be conferred by those Intelligences whom thou shalt thus render propitious. It was from thence I brought my sabres, and it is there that Soliman Ben Daoud 'reposes, surrounded by the talismans that control the world."

The astonished Caliph trembled as he answered, yet in a style that showed him to be no novice in preternatural adventures: "Where art thou? be present to my eyes; dissipate the gloom that perplexes me, and of which I deem thee the cause; after the many flambeaux I have burnt to discover thee, thou mayest at least grant a glimpse of thy horrible visage."

"Abjure then Mahomet," replied the Indian, "and promise me full proofs of thy sincerity, otherwise thou shalt never behold me again."

The unhappy Caliph, instigated by insatiable curiosity, lavished his promises in the utmost profusion. The sky immediately brightened; and by the light of the planets, which seemed almost to blaze, Vathek beheld the earth open, and at the extremity of a vast black chasm, a portal of ebony,

before which stood the Indian, still blacker, holding in his hand a golden key that caused the lock to resound.

"How," cried Vathek, "can I descend to thee without the certainty of breaking my neck? come take me, and instantly open the portal."

"Not so fast," replied the Indian, "impatient Caliph! Know that I am parched with thirst, and cannot open this door till my thirst be thoroughly appeased. I require the blood of fifty of the most beautiful sons of thy vizers and great men, or neither can my thirst nor thy curiosity be satisfied. Return to Samarah, procure for me this necessary libation, come back hither, throw it thyself into this chasm, and then shalt thou see!"

Having thus spoken the Indian turned his back on the Caliph, who, incited by the suggestion of demons, resolved on the direful sacrifice. He now pretended to have regained his tranquillity, and set out for Samarah amidst the acclamations of a people who still loved him, and forebore not to rejoice when they believed him to have recovered his reason. So successfully did he conceal the emotion of his heart, that even Carathis and Morakanabad were equally deceived with the rest. Nothing was heard of but festivals and rejoicings; the ball, which no tongue had hitherto ventured to mention, was again brought on the tapis; a general laugh went round, though many, still smarting under the hands of the surgeon from the hurts received in that memorable adventure, had no great reason for mirth.

The prevalence of this gay humour was not a little



grateful to Vathek, as perceiving how much it conduced to his project. He put on the appearance of affability to every one, but especially to his viziers and the grandees of his court, whom he failed not to regale with a sumptuous banquet, during which he insensibly inclined the conversation to the children of his guests. Having asked with a good-natured air who of them were blessed with the handsomest boys, every father at once asserted the pretensions of his own, and the contest imperceptibly grew so warm that nothing could have witholden them from coming to blows but their profound reverence for the person of the Caliph. Under the pretence, therefore, of reconciling the disputants, Vathek took upon him to decide; and with this view commanded the boys to be brought.

It was not long before a troop of these poor children made their appearance, all equipped by their fond mothers with such ornaments as might give the greatest relief to their beauty, or most advantageously display the graces of their age. But whilst this brilliant assemblage attracted the eyes and hearts of every one besides, the Caliph scrutinised each in his turn with a malignant avidity that passed for attention, and selected from their number the fifty whom he judged the Giaour would prefer.

With an equal show of kindness as before, he proposed to celebrate a festival on the plain for the entertainment of his young favourites, who he said ought to rejoice still more than all at the restoration of his health, on account of the favours he intended for them.

The Caliph's proposal was received with the greatest delight, and soon published through Samarah. Litters, camels, and horses were prepared. Women and children, old men and young, every one placed himself in the station he chose. The cavalcade set forward, attended by all the confectioners in the city and its precincts; the populace following on foot composed an amazing crowd, and occasioned no little noise; all was joy, nor did any one call to mind what most of them had suffered when they first travelled the road they were now passing so gaily.

The evening was serene, the air refreshing, the sky clear, and the flowers exhaled their fragrance; the beams of the declining sun, whose mild splendour reposed on the summit of the mountain, shed a glow of ruddy light over its green declivity and the white flocks sporting upon it; no sounds were audible, save the murmurs of the Four Fountains, and the reeds and voices of shepherds, calling to each other from different eminences.

The lovely innocents proceeding to the destined sacrifice added not a little to the hilarity of the scene; they approached the plain full of sportiveness, some coursing butterflies, others culling flowers, or picking up the shining little pebbles that attracted their notice. At intervals they nimbly started from each other, for the sake of being caught again and mutually imparting a thousand caresses.

The dreadful chasm, at whose bottom the portal of ebony was placed, began to appear at a distance; it looked like a black streak that divided the plain. Morakanabad and his companions took it for some

work which the Caliph had ordered; unhappy men! little did they surmise for what it was destined.

Vathek, not liking they should examine it too nearly, stopped the procession, and ordered a spacious circle to be formed on this side, at some distance from the accursed chasm. The body-guard of eunuchs was detached to measure out the lists intended for the games, and prepare rings for the lines to keep off the crowd. The fifty competitors were soon stripped, and presented to the admiration of the spectators the suppleness and grace of their delicate limbs; their eyes sparkled with a joy which those of their fond parents reflected. Every one offered wishes for the little candidate nearest his heart, and doubted not of his being victorious; a breathless suspense awaited the contest of these amiable and innocent victims.

The Caliph, availing himself of the first moment to retire from the crowd, advanced towards the chasm, and there heard, yet not without shuddering, the voice of the Indian, who, gnashing his teeth, eagerly demanded: "Where are they? where are they? perceivest thou not how my mouth waters?"

"Relentless Giaour!" answered Vathek with emotion, "can nothing content thee but the massacre of these lovely victims? Ah! wert thou to behold their beauty it must certainly move thy compassion."

"Perdition on thy compassion, babbler!" cried the Indian; "give them me, instantly give them, or my portal shall be closed against thee for ever!"

"Not so loudly," replied the Caliph, blushing.

"I understand thee," returned the Giaour with the

grin of an ogre ; "thou wantest to summon up more presence of mind ; I will for a moment forbear."

During this exquisite dialogue the games went forward with all alacrity, and at length concluded just as the twilight began to overcast the mountains. Vathek, who was still standing on the edge of the chasm, called out, with all his might : "Let my fifty little favourites approach me separately, and let them come in the order of their success. To the first I will give my diamond bracelet, to the second my collar of emeralds, to the third my aigret of rubies, to the fourth my girdle of topazes, and to the rest each a part of my dress, even down to my slippers."

This declaration was received with reiterated acclamations, and all extolled the liberality of a prince who would thus strip himself for the amusement of his subjects and the encouragement of the rising generation.

The Caliph in the meanwhile undressed himself by degrees, and raising his arm as high as he was able, made each of the prizes glitter in the air ; but whilst he delivered it with one hand to the child, who sprung forward to receive it, he with the other pushed the poor innocent into the gulf, where the Giaour with a sullen muttering incessantly repeated, "More ! more !"

This dreadful device was executed with so much dexterity, that the boy who was approaching him remained unconscious of the fate of his forerunner ; and as to spectators, the shades of evening, together with their distance, precluded them from perceiving any object distinctly. Vathek, having in this manner

thrown in the last of the fifty, and expecting that the Giaour, on receiving them would have presented the key, already fancied himself as great as Soliman, and consequently above being amenable for what he had done: when, to his utter amazement, the chasm closed, and the ground became as entire as the rest of the plain.

No language could express his rage and despair. He execrated the perfidy of the Indian, loaded him with the most infamous invectives, and stamped with his foot as resolving to be heard; he persisted in this demeanour till his strength failed him, and then fell on the earth like one void of sense. His viziers and grandees, who were nearer than the rest, supposed him at first to be sitting on the grass at play with their amiable children; but at length prompted by doubt, they advanced towards the spot and found the Caliph alone, who wildly demanded what they wanted?

“Our children! our children!” cried they.

“It is assuredly pleasant,” said he, “to make me accountable for accidents; your children while at play fell from the precipice that was here, and I should have experienced their fate had I not been saved by a sudden start back.”

At these words the fathers of the fifty boys cried out aloud, the mothers repeated their exclamations an octave higher, whilst the rest, without knowing the cause, soon drowned the voices of both with still louder lamentations of their own.

“Our Caliph,” said they, and the report soon circulated, “our Caliph has played us this trick to gratify

his accursed Giaour. Let us punish him for his perfidy! let us avenge ourselves! let us avenge the blood of the innocent! let us throw this cruel prince into the gulf that is near, and let his name be mentioned no more!"

At this rumour and these menaces, Carathis, full of consternation, hastened to Morakanabad and said: "Vizier, you have lost two beautiful boys, and must necessarily be the most afflicted of fathers, but you are virtuous, save your master."

"I will brave every hazard," replied the vizier, "to rescue him from his present danger, but afterwards will abandon him to his fate. Bababalouk," continued he, "put yourself at the head of your eunuchs; disperse the mob, and if possible bring back this unhappy prince to his palace." Bababalouk and his fraternity, felicitating each other in a low voice on their disability of ever being fathers, obeyed the mandate of the vizier; who, seconding their exertions to the utmost of his power, at length accomplished his generous enterprise, and retired as he resolved to lament at his leisure.

No sooner had the Caliph re-entered his palace than Carathis commanded the doors to be fastened; but perceiving the tumult to be still violent, and hearing the imprecation which resounded from all quarters, she said to her son: "Whether the populace be right or wrong, it behoves you to provide for your safety; let us retire to your own apartment, and from thence through the subterranean passage, known only to ourselves, into your tower; there, with the assistance of the mutes who never leave it, we may be able



to make some resistance. Bababalouk, supposing us to be still in the palace, will guard its avenues for his own sake; and we shall soon find, without the counsels of that blubberer Morakanabad, what expedient may be the best to adopt."

Vathek, without making the least reply, acquiesced in his mother's proposal, and repeated as he went: "Nefarious Giaour! where art thou? hast thou not yet devoured these poor children? where are thy sabres? thy golden key? thy talismans?"

Carathis, who guessed from these interrogations a part of the truth, had no difficulty to apprehend in getting at the whole, as soon as he should be a little composed in his tower. This princess was so far from being influenced by scruples, that she was as wicked as woman could be, which is not saying a little, for the sex pique themselves on their superiority in every competition. The recital of the Caliph, therefore, occasioned neither terror nor surprise to his mother; she felt no emotion but from the promises of the Giaour, and said to her son: "This Giaour, it must be confessed, is somewhat sanguinary in his taste, but the terrestrial powers are always terrible; nevertheless, what the one hath promised and the others can confer will prove a sufficient indemnification; no crimes should be thought too dear for such a reward; forbear then to revile the Indian; you have not fulfilled the conditions to which his services are annexed; for instance, is not a sacrifice to the subterranean Genii required? and should we not be prepared to offer it as soon as the tumult is subsided? This charge I will take on myself, and have no doubt of

succeeding by means of your treasures, which, as there are now so many others in store, may without fear be exhausted."

Accordingly the princess, who possessed the most consummate skill in the art of persuasion, went immediately back through the subterranean passage; and presenting herself to the populace from a window of the palace, began to harangue them with all the address of which she was mistress, whilst Bababalouk showered money from both hands amongst the crowd, who by these united means were soon appeased; every person retired to his home and Carathis returned to the tower.

Prayer at break of day was announced, when Carathis and Vathek ascended the steps which led to the summit of the tower, where they remained for some time, though the weather was lowering and wet. This impending gloom corresponded with their malignant dispositions; but when the sun began to break through the clouds, they ordered a pavilion to be raised, as a screen from the intrusion of his beams. The Caliph, overcome with fatigue, sought refreshment from repose, at the same time hoping that significant dreams might attend on his slumbers; whilst the indefatigable Carathis, followed by a party of her mutes, descended to prepare whatever she judged proper for the oblation of the approaching night.

By secret stairs, known only to herself and to her son, she first repaired to the mysterious recesses in which were deposited the mummies that had been brought from the catacombs of the ancient Pharaohs; of these she ordered several to be taken. From

thence she resorted to a gallery where, under the guard of fifty female negroes, mute and blind of the right eye, were preserved the oil of the most venomous serpents, rhinoceros' horns, and woods of a subtle and penetrating odour procured from the interior of the Indies, together with a thousand other horrible rarities. This collection had been formed for a purpose like the present by Carathis herself, from a presentiment that she might one day enjoy some intercourse with the infernal powers to whom she had ever been passionately attached, and to whose taste she was no stranger.

To familiarise herself the better with the horrors in view, the princess remained in the company of her negresses, who squinted in the most amiable manner from the only eye they had, and leered with exquisite delight at the skulls and skeletons which Carathis had drawn forth from her cabinets, whose key she intrusted to no one; all of them making contortions, and uttering a frightful jargon, but very amusing to the princess, till at last being stunned by their gibbering, and suffocated by the potency of their exhalations, she was forced to quit the gallery, after stripping it of a part of its treasures.

Whilst she was thus occupied the Caliph, who instead of the visions he expected had acquired in these insubstantial regions a voracious appetite, was greatly provoked at the negresses; for having totally forgotten their deafness, he had impatiently asked them for food, and seeing them regardless of his demand, he began to cuff, pinch, and push them, till Carathis arrived to terminate a scene so indecent, to

the great content of these miserable creatures, who, having been brought up by her, understood all her signs, and communicated in the same way their thoughts in return.

"Son! what means all this?" said she, panting for breath. "I thought I heard, as I came up, the shrieks of a thousand bats tearing from their crannies in the recesses of a cavern; and it was the outcry only of these poor mutes, whom you were so unmercifully abusing. In truth you but ill deserve the admirable provision I have brought you."

"Give it me instantly," exclaimed the Caliph; "I am perishing for hunger!"

"As to that," answered she, "you must have an excellent stomach, if it can digest what I have been preparing."

"Be quick," replied the Caliph; "but, oh heavens! what horrors! what do you intend?"

"Come, come," returned Carathis, "be not so squeamish, but help me to arrange everything properly, and you shall see that what you reject with such symptoms of disgust will soon complete your felicity. Let us get ready the pile for the sacrifice of to-night, and think not of eating till that is performed; know you not that all solemn rites are preceded by a rigorous abstinence?"

The Caliph, not daring to object, abandoned himself to grief and the wind that ravaged his entrails, whilst his mother went forward with the requisite operations. Phials of serpents' oil, mummies and bones were soon set in order on the balustrade of the tower; the pile began to rise, and in three hours

was as many cubits high. At length darkness approached, and Carathis, having stripped herself to her inmost garment, clapped her hands in an impulse of ecstasy and struck light with all her force. The mutes followed her example; but Vathek, extenuated with hunger and impatience, was unable to support himself, and fell down in a swoon. The sparks had already kindled the dry wood, the venomous oil burst into a thousand blue flames, the mummies dissolving emitted a thick dun vapour, and the rhinoceros' horns beginning to consume, all together diffused such a stench, that the Caliph recovering started from his trance, and gazed wildly on the scene in full blaze around him. The oil gushed forth in a plenitude of streams; and the negresses, who supplied it without intermission, united their cries to those of the princess. At last the fire became so violent, and the flames reflected from the polished marble so dazzling, that the Caliph, unable to withstand the heat and the blaze, effected his escape, and clambered up the imperial standard.

In the meantime the inhabitants of Samarah, scared at the light which shone over the city, arose in haste, ascended their roofs, beheld the tower on fire, and hurried half naked to the square. Their love to their sovereign immediately awoke; and apprehending him in danger of perishing in his tower, their whole thoughts were occupied with the means of his safety. Morakanabad flew from his retirement, wiped away his tears, and cried out for water like the rest. Bababalouk, whose olfactory nerves were more familiarised to magical odours, readily conjecturing that Carathis

was engaged in her favourite amusements, strenuously exhorted them not to be alarmed. Him however they treated as an old poltroon, and forbore not to style him a rascally traitor. The camels and dromedaries were advancing with water, but no one knew by which way to enter the tower. Whilst the populace was obstinate in forcing the doors, a violent east wind drove such a volume of flame against them, as at first forced them off, but afterwards rekindled their zeal; at the same time the stench of the horns and mummies increasing, most of the crowd fell backward in a state of suffocation; those that kept their feet mutually wondered at the cause of the smell, and admonished each other to retire. Morakanabad, more sick than the rest, remained in a piteous condition; holding his nose with one hand, he persisted in his efforts with the other, to burst open the doors and obtain admission. A hundred and forty of the strongest and most resolute at length accomplished their purpose; having gained the staircase by their violent exertions, they attained a great height in a quarter of an hour.

Carathis, alarmed at the signs of her mutes, advanced to the staircase, went down a few steps, and heard several voices calling out from below: "You shall in a moment have water!" Being rather alert, considering her age, she presently regained the top of the tower, and bade her son suspend the sacrifice for some minutes, adding: "We shall soon be enabled to render it more grateful; certain dolts of your subjects, imagining no doubt that we were on fire, have been rash enough to break through those doors



which had hitherto remained inviolate, for the sake of bringing up water; they are very kind, you must allow, so soon to forget the wrongs you have done them, but that is of little moment. Let us offer them to the Giaour; let them come up; our mutes, who neither want strength nor experience, will soon despatch them, exhausted as they are with fatigue."

"Be it so," answered the Caliph, "provided we finish and I dine."

In fact these good people, out of breath from ascending eleven thousand stairs in such haste, and chagrined at having spilt by the way the water they had taken, were no sooner arrived at the top than the blaze of the flames and the fumes of the mummies at once overpowered their senses. It was a pity! for they beheld not the agreeable smile with which the mutes and the negresses adjusted the cord to their necks; these amiable personages rejoiced, however, no less at the scene; never before had the ceremony of strangling been performed with so much facility; they all fell without the least resistance or struggle, so that Vathek in the space of a few moments found himself surrounded by the dead bodies of his faithfulest subjects, all which were thrown on the top of the pile.

Carathis, whose presence of mind never forsook her, perceiving that she had carcasses sufficient to complete her oblation, commanded the chains to be stretched across the staircase, and the iron doors barricadoed, that no more might come up.

No sooner were these orders obeyed than the tower shook, the dead bodies vanished in the flames,

which at once changed from a swarthy crimson to a bright rose colour; an ambient vapour emitted the most exquisite fragrance, the marble columns rang with harmonious sounds and the liquefied horns diffused a delicious perfume. Carathis, in transports, anticipated the success of her enterprise, whilst her mutes and negresses, to whom these sweets had given the colic, retired to their cells grumbling.

Scarcely were they gone when, instead of the pile, horns, mummies and ashes, the Caliph both saw and felt, with a degree of pleasure which he could not express, a table covered with the most magnificent repast; flagons of wine, and vases of exquisite sherbet floating on snow. He availed himself without scruple of such an entertainment, and had already laid hands on a lamb stuffed with pistachios, whilst Carathis was privately drawing from a filigree urn a parchment that seemed to be endless, and which had escaped the notice of her son; totally occupied in gratifying an importunate appetite, he left her to peruse it without interruption, which having finished, she said to him in an authoritative tone, "Put an end to your gluttony, and hear the splendid promises with which you are favoured!" She then read as follows: "Vathek, my well-beloved, thou hast surpassed my hopes; my nostrils have been regaled by the savour of thy mummies, thy horns, and still more by the lives devoted on the pile. At the full of the moon cause the bands of thy musicians and thy tymbals to be heard; depart from thy palace surrounded by all the pageants of majesty; thy most faithful slaves, thy best beloved wives, thy most mag-

nificent litters, thy richest loaden camels, and set forward on thy way to Istakhar; there await I thy coming; that is the region of wonders; there shalt thou receive the diadem of Gian Ben Gian, the talismans of Soliman, and the treasures of the Pre-adamite Sultans; there shalt thou be solaced with all kinds of delight. But beware how thou enterest any dwelling on thy route, or thou shalt feel the effects of my anger."

The Caliph who, notwithstanding his habitual luxury, had never before dined with so much satisfaction, gave full scope to the joy of these golden tidings, and betook himself to drinking anew. Carathis, whose antipathy to wine was by no means insuperable, failed not to supply a reason for every bumper, which they ironically quaffed to the health of Mahomet. This infernal liquor completed their impious temerity, and prompted them to utter a profusion of blasphemies; they gave a loose to their wit at the expense of the ass of Balaam, the dog of the seven sleepers, and the other animals admitted into the paradise of Mahomet. In this sprightly humour they descended the eleven thousand stairs, diverting themselves as they went at the anxious faces they saw on the square through the oilets of the tower, and at length arrived at the royal apartments by the subterranean passage. Bababalouk was parading to and fro, and issuing his mandates with great pomp to the eunuchs, who were snuffing the lights and painting the eyes of the Circassians. No sooner did he catch sight of the Caliph and his mother, than he exclaimed, "Hah! you have then, I perceive, escaped

from the flames; I was not, however, altogether out of doubt."

"Of what moment is it to us what you thought, or think?" cried Carathis; "go, speed, tell Morakanabad that we immediately want him; and take care how you stop by the way to make your insipid reflections."

Morakanabad delayed not to obey the summons, and was received by Vathek and his mother with great solemnity; they told him, with an air of composure and commiseration, that the fire at the top of the tower was extinguished; but that it had cost the lives of the brave people who sought to assist them.

"Still more misfortunes!" cried Morakanabad, with a sigh. "Ah, commander of the faithful, our holy Prophet is certainly irritated against us! it behoves you to appease him."

"We will appease him hereafter!" replied the Caliph, with a smile that augured nothing of good. "You will have leisure sufficient for your supplications during my absence; for this country is the bane of my health. I am disgusted with the mountain of the Four Fountains, and am resolved to go and drink of the stream of Rocnabad; I long to refresh myself in the delightful valleys which it waters. Do you, with the advice of my mother, govern my dominions, and take care to supply whatever her experiments may demand; for you well know that our tower abounds in materials for the advancement of science."

The tower but ill suited Morakanabad's taste. Im-

mense treasures had been lavished upon it; and nothing had he ever seen carried thither but female negroes, mutes, and abominable drugs. Nor did he know well what to think of Carathis; who, like aameleon, could assume all possible colours; her cursed eloquence had often driven the poor mussulman to his last shifts. He considered, however, that if she possessed but few good qualities, her son had still fewer; and that the alternative on the whole would be in her favour. Consoled, therefore, with this reflection, he went in good spirits to soothe the populace, and make the proper arrangements for his master's journey.

Vathek, to conciliate the spirits of the subterranean palace, resolved that his expedition should be uncommonly splendid. With this view he confiscated on all sides the property of his subjects, whilst his worthy mother stripped the seraglios she visited of the gems they contained. She collected all the sempstresses and embroiderers of Samarah and other cities to the distance of sixty leagues, to prepare pavilions, palanquins, sofas, canopies and litters for the train of the monarch. There was not left in Masulipatan a single piece of chintz, and so much muslin had been bought up to dress out Bababalouk and the other black eunuchs, that there remained not an ell in the whole Irak of Babylon.

During these preparations Carathis, who never lost sight of her great object, which was to obtain favour with the powers of darkness, made select parties of the fairest and most delicate ladies of the city; but in the midst of their gaiety she contrived to introduce

serpents amongst them, and to break pots of scorpions, under the table; they all bit to a wonder; and Carathis would have left them to bite, were it not that, to fill up the time, she now and then amused herself in curing their wounds with an excellent anodyne of her own invention, for this good princess abhorred being indolent.

Vathek, who was not altogether so active as his mother, devoted his time to the sole gratification of his senses, in the palaces which were severally dedicated to them; he disgusted himself no more with the Divan or the Mosque. One half of Samarah followed his example, whilst the other lamented the progress of corruption.

In the midst of these transactions, the embassy returned which had been sent in pious times to Mecca. It consisted of the most reverend Moullahs, who had fulfilled their commission and brought back one of those precious besoms which are used to sweep the sacred Caaba; a present truly worthy of the greatest potentate on earth!

The Caliph happened at this instant to be engaged in an apartment by no means adapted to the reception of embassies, though adorned with a certain magnificence, not only to render it agreeable, but also because he resorted to it frequently, and stayed a considerable time together. Whilst occupied in this retreat, he heard the voice of Bababalouk calling out from between the door and the tapestry that hung before it: "Here are the excellent Mahomet Ebn Edris al Shafei, and the seraphic Al Mouhadethin, who have brought the besom from Mecca, and with



tears of joy intreat they may present it to your majesty in person."

"Let them bring the besom hither ; it may be of use," said Vathek, who was still employed, not having quite racked off his wine.

"How!" answered Bababalouk, half aloud and amazed.

"Obey," replied the Caliph, "for it is my sovereign will ; go instantly, vanish ; for here will I receive the good folk, who have thus filled thee with joy."

The eunuch departed muttering, and bade the venerable train attend him. A sacred rapture was diffused amongst these reverend old men. Though fatigued with the length of their expedition, they followed Bababalouk with an alertness almost miraculous, and felt themselves highly flattered, as they swept along the stately porticoes, that the Caliph would not receive them like ambassadors in ordinary in his hall of audience. Soon reaching the interior of the harem (where, through blinds of persian, they perceived large soft eyes, dark and blue, that went and came like lightning), penetrated with respect and wonder, and full of their celestial mission, they advanced in procession towards the small corridors that appeared to terminate in nothing, but nevertheless led to the cell where the Caliph expected their coming.

"What! is the commander of the faithful sick?" said Ebn Edris al Shafei in a low voice to his companion.

"I rather think he is in his oratory," answered Al Mouhadethin.

Vathek, who heard the dialogue, cried out: "What imports it you how I am employed? approach without delay."

They advanced, and Bababalouk almost sunk with confusion, whilst the Caliph, without showing himself, put forth his hand from behind the tapestry that hung before the door, and demanded of them the besom. Having prostrated themselves as well as the corridor would permit, and even in a tolerable semicircle, the venerable Al Shafei, drawing forth the besom from the embroidered and perfumed scarves in which it had been enveloped, and secured from the profane gaze of vulgar eyes, arose from his associates, and advanced with an air of the most awful solemnity towards the supposed oratory; but with what astonishment! with what horror was he seized! Vathek bursting out into a villanous laugh, snatched the besom from his trembling hand, and, fixing upon some cobwebs that hung suspended from the ceiling, gravely brushed away till not a single one remained. The old men, overpowered with amazement, were unable to lift their beards from the ground; for, as Vathek had carelessly left the tapestry between them half drawn, they were witnesses to the whole transaction; their tears gushed forth on the marble, Al Mouhadethin swooned through mortification and fatigue, whilst the Caliph, throwing himself backward on his seat, shouted and clapped his hands without mercy. At last, addressing himself to Bababalouk: "My dear black," said he, "go, regale these pious poor souls with my good wine from Shiraz; and as they can boast of having seen more of my palace than any one besides,

let them also visit my office courts, and lead them out by the back steps that go to my stables." Having said this he threw the besom in their face, and went to enjoy the laugh with Carathis. Bababalouk did all in his power to console the ambassadors, but the two most infirm expired on the spot; the rest were carried to their beds, from whence, being heart-broken with sorrow and shame, they never arose.

The succeeding night Vathek, attended by his mother, ascended the tower to see if everything were ready for his journey; for he had great faith in the influence of the stars. The planets appeared in their most favourable aspects. The Caliph, to enjoy so flattering a sight, supped gaily on the roof, and fancied that he heard during his repast loud shouts of laughter resound through the sky, in a manner that inspired the fullest assurance.

All was in motion at the palace; lights were kept burning through the whole of the night; the sound of implements and of artisans finishing their work, the voices of women and their guardians who sung at their embroidery, all conspired to interrupt the stillness of nature and infinitely delight the heart of Vathek, who imagined himself going in triumph to sit upon the throne of Soliman.

The people were not less satisfied than himself, all assisted to accelerate the moment which should rescue them from the wayward caprices of so extravagant a master.

The day preceding the departure of this infatuated prince was employed by Carathis in repeating to him the decrees of the mysterious parchment, which she

had thoroughly gotten by heart, and in recommending him not to enter the habitation of any one by the way; "for well thou knowest," added she, "how liquorish thy taste is after good dishes and young damsels; let me therefore enjoin thee to be content with thy old cooks, who are the best in the world, and not to forget that in thy ambulatory seraglio there are three dozen pretty faces, which Bababalouk hath not yet unveiled. I myself have a great desire to watch over thy conduct, and visit the subterranean palace, which no doubt contains whatever can interest persons like us; there is nothing so pleasing as retiring to caverns; my taste for dead bodies and everything like mummy is decided, and I am confident thou wilt see the most exquisite of their kind. Forget me not then, but the moment thou art in possession of the talismans which are to open to thee the mineral kingdoms and the centre of the earth itself, fail not to despatch some trusty genius to take me and my cabinet, for the oil of the serpents I have pinched to death will be a pretty present to the Giaour, who cannot but be charmed with such dainties."

Scarcely had Carathis ended this edifying discourse when the sun, setting behind the mountain of the Four Fountains, gave place to the rising moon; this planet being that evening at full appeared of unusual beauty and magnitude in the eyes of the women, the eunuchs and the pages, who were all impatient to set forward. The city re-echoed with shouts of joy and flourishing of trumpets; nothing was visible but plumes nodding on pavilions, and aigrets shining in



VATHEK AND CARATHIS CONSULT THE PLANETS.





the mild lustre of the moon ; the spacious square resembled an immense parterre, variegated with the most stately tulips of the East.

Arrayed in the robes which were only worn at the most distinguished ceremonials, and supported by his Vizier and Bababalouk, the Caliph descended the grand staircase of the tower in the sight of all his people ; he could not forbear pausing at intervals to admire the superb appearance which everywhere courted his view, whilst the whole multitude, even to the camels with their sumptuous burthens, knelt down before him. For some time a general stillness prevailed, which nothing happened to disturb but the shrill screams of some eunuchs in the rear ; these vigilant guards, having remarked certain cages of the ladies swagging somewhat awry, and discovered that a few adventurous gallants had contrived to get in, soon dislodged the enraptured culprits, and consigned them with good commendations to the surgeons of the serail. The majesty of so magnificent a spectacle was not, however, violated by incidents like these. Vathek meanwhile saluted the moon with an idolatrous air, that neither pleased Morakanabad nor the doctors of the law, any more than the viziers and the grandees of his court, who were all assembled to enjoy the last view of their sovereign.

At length the clarions and trumpets from the top of the tower announced the prelude of departure ; though the instruments were in unison with each other, yet a singular dissonance was blended with their sounds ; this proceeded from Carathis, who was

singing her direful orisons to the Giaour, whilst the negresses and mutes supplied thoroughbase without articulating a word. The good Mussulmans fancied that they heard the sullen hum of those nocturnal insects which presage evil, and importuned Vathek to beware how he ventured his sacred person.

On a given signal the great standard of the Califat was displayed, twenty thousand lances shone around it, and the Caliph, treading loyally on the cloth of gold which had been spread for his feet, ascended the litter amidst the general awe that possessed his subjects.

The expedition commenced with the utmost order and so entire a silence, that even the locusts were heard from the thickets on the plain of Catoul. Gaiety and good-humour prevailing, six good leagues were past before the dawn; and the morning star was still glittering in the firmament when the whole of this numerous train had halted on the banks of the Tigris, where they encamped to repose for the rest of the day.

The three days that followed were spent in the same manner; but on the fourth the heavens looked angry, lightnings broke forth in frequent flashes, re-echoing peals of thunder succeeded, and the trembling Circassians clung with all their might to their ugly guardians. The Caliph himself was greatly inclined to take shelter in the large town of Gulchissar, the governor of which came forth to meet him, and tendered every kind of refreshment the place could supply; but having examined his tablets, he suffered the rain to soak him almost to the bone,

notwithstanding the importunity of his first favourites. Though he began to regret the palace of the senses, yet he lost not sight of his enterprise, and his sanguine expectations confirmed his resolution; his geographers were ordered to attend him, but the weather proved so terrible that these poor people exhibited a lamentable appearance; and as no long journeys had been undertaken since the time of Haroun al Raschid, their maps of the different countries were in a still worse plight than themselves; every one was ignorant which way to turn; for Vathek, though well versed in the course of the heavens, no longer knew his situation on earth; he thundered even louder than the elements, and muttered forth certain hints of the bow-string, which were not very soothing to literary ears. Disgusted at the toilsome weariness of the way, he determined to cross over the craggy heights and follow the guidance of a peasant, who undertook to bring him in four days to Rocnabad. Remonstrances were all to no purpose; his resolution was fixed, and an invasion commenced on the province of the goats, who sped away in large troops before them. It was curious to view on these half calcined rocks camels richly caparisoned, and pavilions of gold and silk waving on their summits, which till then had never been covered but with sapless thistles and fern.

The females and eunuchs uttered shrill wailings at the sight of the precipices below them, and the dreary prospects that opened in the vast gorges of the mountains. Before they could reach the ascent of the steepest rock night overtook them, and a

boisterous tempest arose, which, having rent the awnings of the palanquins and cages, exposed to the raw gusts the poor ladies within, who had never before felt so piercing a cold. The dark clouds that overcast the face of the sky deepened the horrors of this disastrous night, insomuch that nothing could be heard distinctly but the mewling of pages and lamentations of sultanas.

To increase the general misfortune, the frightful uproar of wild beasts resounded at a distance, and there were soon perceived in the forest they were skirting the glaring of eyes, which could belong only to devils or tigers. The pioneers, who as well as they could had marked out a track, and a part of the advanced guard were devoured before they had been in the least apprised of their danger. The confusion that prevailed was extreme; wolves, tigers, and other carnivorous animals, invited by the howling of their companions, flocked together from every quarter; the crashing of bones was heard on all sides, and a fearful rush of wings overhead, for now vultures also began to be of the party.

The terror at length reached the main body of the troops which surrounded the monarch and his harem, at the distance of two leagues from the scene. Vathek (voluptuously reposed in his capacious litter upon cushions of silk, with two little pages beside him of complexions more fair than the enamel of Frangestan, who were occupied in keeping off flies) was soundly asleep, and contemplating in his dreams the treasures of Soliman. The shrieks, however, of his wives awoke him with a start, and instead of the

Giaour with his key of gold, he beheld Bababalouk full of consternation.

"Sire," exclaimed this good servant of the most potent of monarchs, "misfortune is arrived at its height; wild beasts, who entertain no more reverence for your sacred person than for that of a dead ass, have beset your camels and their drivers; thirty of the richest laden are already become their prey, as well as your confectioners, your cooks, and purveyors; and unless our holy Prophet should protect us, we shall have all eaten our last meal."

At the mention of eating the Caliph lost all patience; he began to bellow and even beat himself (for there was no seeing in the dark). The rumour every instant increased, and Bababalouk, finding no good could be done with his master, stopped both his ears against the hurly-burly of the harem, and called out aloud: "Come, ladies and brothers! all hands to work; strike light in a moment! never shall it be said that the Commander of the faithful served to regale these infidel brutes."

Though there wanted not in this bevy of beauties a sufficient number of capricious and wayward, yet on the present occasion they were all compliance; fires were visible in a twinkling in all their cages; ten thousand torches were lighted at once; the Caliph himself seized a large one of wax; every person followed his example, and by kindling ropes' ends dipped in oil and fastened on poles, an amazing blaze was spread. The rocks were covered with the splendour of sunshine; the trails of sparks wafted

by the wind communicated to the dry fern, of which there was plenty. Serpents were observed to crawl forth from their retreats with amazement and hissings, whilst the horses snorted, stamped the ground, tossed their noses in the air, and plunged about without mercy.

One of the forests of cedar that bordered their way took fire, and the branches that overhung the path, extending their flames to the muslins and chintzes which covered the cages of the ladies, obliged them to jump out at the peril of their necks. Vathek, who vented on the occasion a thousand blasphemies, was himself compelled to touch with his sacred feet the naked earth.

Never had such an incident happened before. Full of mortification, shame, and despondence, and not knowing how to walk, the ladies fell into the dirt. "Must I go on foot!" said one; "Must I wet my feet!" cried another; "Must I soil my dress!" asked a third; "Execrable Bababalouk!" exclaimed all; "Outcast of hell! what hadst thou to do with torches? Better were it to be eaten by tigers than to fall into our present condition! we are for ever undone! Not a porter is there in the army, nor a currier of camels, but hath seen some part of our bodies, and what is worse, our very faces!" On saying this the most bashful amongst them hid their foreheads on the ground, whilst such as had more boldness flew at Bababalouk; but he, well apprised of their humour and not wanting in shrewdness, betook himself to his heels along with his comrades, all dropping their torches and striking their tymbals.



It was not less light than in the brightest of the dog-days, and the weather was hot in proportion; but how degrading was the spectacle, to behold the Caliph bespattered like an ordinary mortal! As the exercise of his faculties seemed to be suspended, one of his Ethiopian wives (for he delighted in variety) clasped him in her arms, threw him upon her shoulder like a sack of dates, and finding that the fire was hemming them in, set off with no small expedition, considering the weight of her burden. The other ladies, who had just learnt the use of their feet, followed her, their guards galloped after, and the camel-drivers brought up the rear as fast as their charge would permit.

They soon reached the spot where the wild beasts had commenced the carnage, and which they had too much spirit to leave, notwithstanding the approaching tumult and the luxurious supper they had made; Bababalouk nevertheless seized on a few of the plumpest, which were unable to budge from the place, and began to flay them with admirable adroitness. The cavalcade being got so far from the conflagration as that the heat felt rather grateful than violent, it was immediately resolved on to halt. The tattered chintzes were picked up, the scraps left by the wolves and tigers interred, and vengeance was taken on some dozens of vultures that were too much glutted to rise on the wing. The camels, which had been left unmolested to make sal ammoniac, being numbered, and the ladies once more enclosed in their cages, the imperial tent was pitched on the levellest ground they could find.

Vathek, reposing upon a mattress of down, and tolerably recovered from the jolting of the Ethiopian, who to his feelings seemed the roughest trotting jade he had hitherto mounted, called out for something to eat. But alas! those delicate cakes which had been baked in silver ovens for his royal mouth, those rich manchets, amber comfits, flagons of Schiraz wine, porcelain vases of snow, and grapes from the banks of the Tigris, were all irremediably lost! And nothing had Bababalouk to present in their stead but a roasted wolf, vultures *à la daube*, aromatic herbs of the most acrid poignancy, rotten truffles, boiled thistles, and such other wild plants as must ulcerate the throat and parch up the tongue. Nor was he better provided in the article of drink, for he could procure nothing to accompany these irritating viands but a few phials of abominable brandy, which had been secreted by the scullions in their slippers.

Vathek made wry faces at so savage a repast, and Bababalouk answered them with shrugs and contortions; the Caliph, however, ate with tolerable appetite, and fell into a nap that lasted six hours. The splendour of the sun, reflected from the white cliffs of the mountains, in spite of the curtains that enclosed him, at length disturbed his repose; he awoke terrified, and stung to the quick by those wormwood-colour flies, which emit from their wings a suffocating stench. The miserable monarch was perplexed how to act, though his wits were not idle in seeking expedients, whilst Bababalouk lay snoring amidst a swarm of those insects, that busily thronged to pay court to his nose. The little pages, famished

with hunger, had dropped their fans on the ground, and exerted their dying voices in bitter reproaches on the Caliph, who now for the first time heard the language of truth.

Thus stimulated, he renewed his imprecations against the Giaour, and bestowed upon Mahomet some soothing expressions. "Where am I?" cried he; "what are these dreadful rocks? these valleys of darkness? are we arrived at the horrible Kaf? is the Simurgh coming to pluck out my eyes, as a punishment for undertaking this impious enterprise?" Having said this he bellowed like a calf, and turned himself towards an outlet in the side of his pavilion; but alas! what objects occurred to his view? on one side a plain of black sand that appeared to be unbounded, and on the other perpendicular crags, bristled over with those abominable thistles which had so severely lacerated his tongue. He fancied however that he perceived, amongst the brambles and briars, some gigantic flowers, but was mistaken; for these were only the dangling palampores and variegated tatters of his gay retinue. As there were several clefts in the rock from whence water seemed to have flowed, Vathek applied his ear with the hope of catching the sound of some latent runnel, but could only distinguish the low murmurs of his people, who were repining at their journey, and complaining for the want of water.

"To what purpose," asked they, "have we been brought hither? hath our Caliph another tower to build? or have the relentless Afrits, whom Carathis so much loves, fixed in this place their abode?"

At the name of Carathis, Vathek recollected the tablets he had received from his mother, who assured him they were fraught with preternatural qualities, and advised him to consult them as emergencies might require. Whilst he was engaged in turning them over, he heard a shout of joy and a loud clapping of hands; the curtains of his pavilion were soon drawn back, and he beheld Bababalouk, followed by a troop of his favourites, conducting two dwarfs, each a cubit high, who brought between them a large basket of melons, oranges, and pomegranates. They were singing in the sweetest tones the words that follow :

“ We dwell on the top of these rocks in a cabin of rushes and canes; the eagles envy us our nest; a small spring supplies us with Abdest, and we daily repeat prayers which the Prophet approves. We love you, O commander of the faithful! our master, the good Emir Fakreddin, loves you also; he reveres in your person the vicerent of Mahomet. Little as we are, in us he confides; he knows our hearts to be good as our bodies are contemptible, and hath placed us here to aid those who are bewildered on these dreary mountains. Last night, whilst we were occupied within our cell in reading the holy Koran, a sudden hurricane blew out our lights and rocked our habitation; for two whole hours a palpable darkness prevailed, but we heard sounds at a distance which we conjectured to proceed from the bells of a Cafila passing over the rocks; our ears were soon filled with deplorable shrieks, frightful roarings, and the sound of tymbals. Chilled with terror we con-

cluded that the Deggial, with his exterminating angels, had sent forth their plagues on the earth. In the midst of these melancholy reflections we perceived flames of the deepest red glow in the horizon, and found ourselves in a few moments covered with flakes of fire; amazed at so strange an appearance, we took up the volume dictated by the blessed Intelligence, and kneeling by the light of the fire that surrounded us, we recited the verse which says: 'Put no trust in anything but the mercy of Heaven; there is no help save in the holy Prophet; the mountain of Kaf itself may tremble, it is the power of Alla only that cannot be moved.' After having pronounced these words we felt consolation, and our minds were hushed into a sacred repose; silence ensued, and our ears clearly distinguished a voice in the air, saying: 'Servants of my faithful servant! go down to the happy valley of Fakreddin; tell him that an illustrious opportunity now offers to satiate the thirst of his hospitable heart. The Commander of true believers is this day bewildered amongst these mountains, and stands in need of thy aid.' We obeyed with joy the angelic mission, and our master, filled with pious zeal, hath culled with his own hands these melons, oranges, and pomegranates; he is following us with a hundred dromedaries laden with the purest waters of the fountains, and is coming to kiss the fringe of your consecrated robe, and implore you to enter his humble habitation, which, placed amidst these barren wilds, resembles an emerald set in lead."

The dwarfs, having ended their address, remained

still standing, and with hands crossed upon their bosoms, preserved a respectful silence.

Vathek in the midst of this curious harangue seized the basket, and long before it was finished the fruits had dissolved in his mouth; as he continued to eat his piety increased, and in the same breath which recited his prayers he called for the Koran and sugar.

Such was the state of his mind when the tablets, which were thrown by at the approach of the dwarfs, again attracted his eye; he took them up, but was ready to drop on the ground when he beheld, in large red characters, these words inscribed by Carathis, which were indeed enough to make him tremble.

“Beware of thy old doctors, and their puny messengers of but one cubit high; distrust their pious frauds, and instead of eating their melons, impale on a spit the bearers of them. Shouldest thou be such a fool as to visit them, the portal of the subterranean palace will be shut in thy face, and with such force as shall shake thee asunder; thy body shall be spit upon, and bats will engender in thy belly.”

“To what tends this ominous rhapsody?” cries the Caliph; “and must I then perish in these deserts with thirst, whilst I may refresh myself in the valley of melons and cucumbers? Accursed be the Giaour, with his portal of ebony! he hath made me dance attendance too long already. Besides, who shall prescribe laws to me? I forsooth must not enter any one’s habitation! Be it so; but what one can I enter that is not my own!”

Bababalouk, who lost not a syllable of this soli-



loquy, applauded it with all his heart, and the ladies for the first time agreed with him in opinion.

The dwarfs were entertained, caressed, and seated with great ceremony on little cushions of satin. The symmetry of their persons was the subject of criticism; not an inch of them was suffered to pass unexamined; knick-knacks and dainties were offered in profusion, but all were declined with respectful gravity. They clambered up the sides of the Caliph's seat, and placing themselves each on one of his shoulders, began to whisper prayers in his ears; their tongues quivered like the leaves of a poplar, and the patience of Vathek was almost exhausted, when the acclamations of the troops announced the approach of Fakreddin, who was come with a hundred old grey-beards and as many Korans and dromedaries; they instantly set about their ablutions, and began to repeat the Bismillah; Vathek, to get rid of these officious monitors, followed their example, for his hands were burning.

The good Emir, who was punctiliously religious and likewise a great dealer in compliments, made a harangue five times more prolix and insipid than his harbingers had already delivered. The Caliph, unable any longer to refrain, exclaimed:

"For the love of Mahomet, my dear Fakreddin, have done! let us proceed to your valley, and enjoy the fruits that Heaven hath vouchsafed you."

The hint of proceeding put all into motion; the venerable attendants of the Emir set forward somewhat slowly, but Vathek, having ordered his little pages in private to goad on the dromedaries, loud

fits of laughter broke forth from the cages, for the unwieldy curvetting of these poor beasts, and the ridiculous distress of their superannuated riders, afforded the ladies no small entertainment.

They descended, however, unhurt into the valley, by the large steps which the Emir had cut in the rock; and already the murmuring of streams, and the rustling of leaves, began to catch their attention. The cavalcade soon entered a path which was skirted by flowering shrubs, and extended to a vast wood of palm-trees, whose branches overspread a building of hewn stone. This edifice was crowned with nine domes, and adorned with as many portals of bronze, on which was engraven the following inscription: "This is the asylum of pilgrims, the refuge of travellers, and the depository of secrets for all parts of the world."

Nine pages, beautiful as the day, and clothed in robes of Egyptian linen, very long and very modest, were standing at each door. They received the whole retinue with an easy and inviting air. Four of the most amiable placed the Caliph on a magnificent taktrevan; four others, somewhat less graceful, took charge of Bababalouk, who capered for joy at the snug little cabin that fell to his share; the pages that remained waited on the rest of the train.

When everything masculine was gone out of sight, the gate of a large enclosure on the right turned on its harmonious hinges, and a young female of a slender form came forth; her light brown hair floated in the hazy breeze of the twilight; a troop of young maidens, like the Pleiades, attended her on tip-toe.

They hastened to the pavilions that contained the sultanas, and the young lady, gracefully bending, said to them :

“Charming Princesses, everything is ready; we have prepared beds for your repose, and strewed your apartments with jasmine; no insects will keep off slumber from visiting your eyelids, we will dispel them with a thousand plumes; come then, amiable ladies! refresh your delicate feet and your ivory limbs in baths of rose water; and by the light of perfumed lamps, your servants will amuse you with tales.”

The sultanas accepted with pleasure these obliging offers, and followed the young lady to the Emir’s harem, where we must for a moment leave them and return to the Caliph.

Vathek found himself beneath a vast dome, illuminated by a thousand lamps of rock crystal; as many vases of the same material, filled with excellent sherbet, sparkled on a large table, where a profusion of viands were spread; amongst others were sweet-breads stewed in milk of almonds, saffron soups, and lamb *à la crème*, of all which the Caliph was amazingly fond. He took of each as much as he was able, testified his sense of the Emir’s friendship by the gaiety of his heart, and made the dwarfs dance against their will, for these little devotees durst not refuse the commander of the faithful; at last he spread himself on the sofa, and slept sounder than he had ever before.

Beneath this dome a general silence prevailed, for there was nothing to disturb it but the jaws of Baba-

balouk, who had untrussed himself to eat with greater advantage, being anxious to make amends for his fast in the mountains. As his spirits were too high to admit of his sleeping, and not loving to be idle, he proposed with himself to visit the harem, and repair to his charge of the ladies, to examine if they had been properly lubricated with the balm of Mecca, if their eyebrows and tresses were in order, and, in a word, to perform all the little offices they might need. He sought for a long time together, but without being able to find out the door; he durst not speak aloud for fear of disturbing the Caliph, and not a soul was stirring in the precincts of the palace; he almost despaired of effecting his purpose, when a low whispering just reached his ear; it came from the dwarfs, who were returned to their old occupation, and for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time in their lives, were reading over the Koran. They very politely invited Bababalouk to be of their party, but his head was full of other concerns. The dwarfs, though scandalised at his dissolute morals, directed him to the apartments he wanted to find; his way thither lay through a hundred dark corridors, along which he groped as he went, and at last began to catch, from the extremity of a passage, the charming gossiping of the women, which not a little delighted his heart. "Ah, ha! what, not yet asleep?" cried he; and taking long strides as he spoke, "did you not suspect me of abjuring my charge? I stayed but to finish what my master had left."

Two of the black eunuchs, on hearing a voice so loud, detached a party in haste, sabre in hand, to

discover the cause; but presently was repeated on all sides: "'Tis only Bababalouk! no one but Bababalouk!" This circumspect guardian, having gone up to a thin veil of carnation-coloured silk that hung before the doorway, distinguished, by means of the softened splendour that shone through it, an oval bath of dark porphyry, surrounded by curtains festooned in large folds; through the apertures between them as they were not drawn close, groups of young slaves were visible, amongst whom Bababalouk perceived his pupils, indulgently expanding their arms, as if to embrace the perfumed water and refresh themselves after their fatigues. The looks of tender languor, their confidential whispers, and the enchanting smiles with which they were imparted, the exquisite fragrance of the roses, all combined to inspire a voluptuousness, which even Bababalouk himself was scarce able to withstand.

He summoned up, however, his usual solemnity, and in the peremptory tone of authority, commanded the ladies instantly to leave the bath. Whilst he was issuing these mandates the young Nouronihar, daughter of the Emir, who was sprightly as an antelope, and full of wanton gaiety, beckoned one of her slaves to let down the great swing, which was suspended to the ceiling by cords of silk, and whilst this was doing, winked to her companions in the bath, who, chagrined to be forced from so soothing a state of indolence, began to twist it round Bababalouk, and tease him with a thousand vagaries.

When Nouronihar perceived that he was exhausted with fatigue, she accosted him with an arch air of re-

spectful concern and said: "My Lord! it is not by any means decent that the chief eunuch of the Caliph, our Sovereign, should thus continue standing; deign but to recline your graceful person upon this sofa, which will burst with vexation if it have not the honour to receive you."

Caught by these flattering accents, Bababalouk gallantly replied: "Delight of the apple of my eye! I accept the invitation of thy honeyed lips; and, to say truth, my senses are dazzled with the radiance that beams from thy charms."

"Repose then at your ease," replied the beauty, and placed him on the pretended sofa which, quicker than lightning, gave way all at once. The rest of the women, having aptly conceived her design, sprang naked from the bath, and plied the swing with such unmerciful jerks, that it swept through the whole compass of a very lofty dome, and took from the poor victim all power of respiration; sometimes his feet rased the surface of the water, and at others the skylight almost flattened his nose; in vain did he pierce the air with the cries of a voice that resembled the ringing of a cracked basin, for their peals of laughter were still more predominant.

Nouronihar, in the inebriety of youthful spirits, being used only to eunuchs of ordinary harems, and having never seen anything so royal and disgusting, was far more diverted than all of the rest; she began to parody some Persian verses, and sung with an accent most demurely piquant:

"O gentle white dove, as thou soar'st through the air,  
Vouchsafe one kind glance on the mate of thy love;



Melodious Philomel, I am thy rose ;  
Warble some couplet to ravish my heart ! ”

The sultanas and their slaves, stimulated by these pleasantries, persevered at the swing with such unremitted assiduity, that at length the cord which had secured it snapped suddenly asunder, and Bababalouk fell floundering like a turtle to the bottom of the bath. This accident occasioned a universal shout ; twelve little doors, till now unobserved, flew open at once, and the ladies in an instant made their escape, after throwing all the towels on his head, and putting out the lights that remained.

The deplorable animal, in water to the chin, overwhelmed with darkness, and unable to extricate himself from the wrap that embarrassed him, was still doomed to hear for his further consolation the fresh bursts of merriment his disaster occasioned. He hustled, but in vain, to get from the bath, for the margin was become so slippery with the oil spilt in breaking the lamps, that at every effort he slid back with a plunge, which resounded aloud through the hollow of the dome. These cursed peals of laughter at every relapse were redoubled ; and he, who thought the place infested rather by devils than women, resolved to cease groping and abide in the bath, where he amused himself with soliloquies, interspersed with imprecations, of which his malicious neighbours reclining on down suffered not an accent to escape. In this delectable plight the morning surprised him. The Caliph, wondering at his absence, had caused him to be everywhere sought for. At last he was drawn forth, almost smothered from the wisp of linen,

and wet even to the marrow. Limping and chattering his teeth, he appeared before his master, who inquired what was the matter, and how he came soused in so strange a pickle?

"And why did you enter this cursed lodge?" answered Bababalouk gruffly. "Ought a monarch like you to visit with his harem the abode of a grey-bearded emir, who knows nothing of life? And with what gracious damsels doth the place, too, abound! Fancy to yourself how they have soaked me like a burnt crust, and made me dance like a jack-pudding the livelong night through, on their damnable swing. What an excellent lesson for your sultanas to follow, into whom I have instilled such reserve and decorum!"

Vathek, comprehending not a syllable of all this invective, obliged him to relate minutely the transaction; but instead of sympathising with the miserable sufferer, he laughed immoderately at the device of the swing, and the figure of Bababalouk mounting upon it. The stung eunuch could scarcely preserve the semblance of respect.

"Ay, laugh, my lord! laugh," said he; "but I wish this Nouronihar would play some trick on you, she is too wicked to spare even majesty itself."

Those words made for the present but a slight impression on the Caliph; but they not long after recurred to his mind.

This conversation was cut short by Fakreddin, who came to request that Vathek would join in the prayers and ablutions to be solemnised on a spacious meadow, watered by innumerable streams. The Caliph

found the waters refreshing, but the prayers abominably irksome; he diverted himself, however, with the multitude of Calenders, Santons, and Dervises, who were continually coming and going, but especially with the Brahmins, Fakirs, and other enthusiasts, who had travelled from the heart of India, and halted on their way with the Emir. These latter had, each of them, some mummery peculiar to himself. One dragged a huge chain wherever he went, another an ouran-outang, whilst a third was furnished with scourges, and all performed to a charm; some clambered up trees, holding one foot in the air; others poised themselves over a fire, and without mercy filliped their noses. There were some amongst them that cherished vermin, which were not ungrateful in requiting their caresses. These rambling fanatics revolted the hearts of the Dervises, the Calenders and Santons; however, the vehemence of their aversion soon subsided, under the hope that the presence of the Caliph would cure their folly, and convert them to the Mussulman faith; but alas! how great was their disappointment! for Vathek, instead of preaching to them, treated them as buffoons, bade them present his compliments to Visnow and Ixhora, and discovered a predilection for a squat old man from the Isle of Serendib, who was more ridiculous than any of the rest.

“Come!” said he, “for the love of your gods bestow a few slaps on your chops to amuse me.”

The old fellow, offended at such an address, began loudly to weep; but as he betrayed a villainous drivelling in his tears, the Caliph turned his back and

listened to Bababalouk, who whispered, whilst he held the umbrella over him : " Your Majesty should be cautious of this odd assembly, which hath been collected I know not for what. Is it necessary to exhibit such spectacles to a mighty Potentate, with interludes of Talapoins more mangy than dogs? Were I you I would command a fire to be kindled, and at once purge the earth of the Emir, his harem, and all his menagerie."

" Tush, dolt," answered Vathek, " and know that all this infinitely charms me ; nor shall I leave the meadow till I have visited every hive of these pious mendicants."

Wherever the Caliph directed his course objects of pity were sure to swarm round him ; the blind, the purblind, smarts without noses, damsels without ears, each to extol the munificence of Fakreddin, who, as well as his attendant greybeards, dealt about gratis plasters and cataplasms to all that applied. At noon a superb corps of cripples made its appearance, and soon after advanced by platoons on the plain, the completest association of invalids that had ever been embodied till then. The blind went groping with the blind, the lame limped on together, and the maimed made gestures to each other with the only arm that remained ; the sides of a considerable waterfall were crowded by the deaf, amongst whom were some from Pegû with ears uncommonly handsome and large, but were still less able to hear than the rest ; nor were there wanting others in abundance with humpbacks, wenny necks, and even horns of an exquisite polish.

The Emir, to aggrandise the solemnity of the

festival in honour of his illustrious visitant, ordered the turf to be spread on all sides with skins and table-cloths, upon which were served up for the good Mussulmans pilaus of every hue, with other orthodox dishes; and by the express order of Vathek, who was shamefully tolerant, small plates of abominations for regaling the rest. This Prince, on seeing so many mouths put in motion, began to think it time for employing his own; in spite therefore of every remonstrance from the chief of his eunuchs, he resolved to have a dinner dressed on the spot. The complaisant Emir immediately gave orders for a table to be placed in the shade of the willows. The first service consisted of fish, which they drew from a river flowing over sands of gold at the foot of a lofty hill; these were broiled as fast as taken, and served up with a sauce of vinegar, and small herbs that grew on Mount Sinai; for everything with the Emir was excellent and pious.

The dessert was not quite set on when the sound of lutes from the hill was repeated by the echoes of the neighbouring mountains. The Caliph, with an emotion of pleasure and surprise, had no sooner raised up his head than a handful of jasmine dropped on his face; an abundance of tittering succeeded the frolic, and instantly appeared through the bushes the elegant forms of several young females, skipping and bounding like roes. The fragrance diffused from their hair struck the sense of Vathek, who, in an ecstasy, suspending his repast, said to Bababalouk:

“Are the Peries come down from their spheres? Note her in particular whose form is so perfect,

venturously running on the brink of the precipice, and turning back her head, as regardless of nothing but the graceful flow of her robe; with what captivating impatience doth she contend with the bushes for her veil! could it be she who threw the jasmine at me?"

"Ay! she it was; and you too would she throw from the top of the rock," answered Bababalouk; "for that is my good friend Nouronihar, who so kindly lent me her swing; my dear lord and master," added he, twisting a twig that hung by the rind from a willow, "let me correct her for her want of respect; the Emir will have no reason to complain, since (bathing what I owe to his piety) he is much to be censured for keeping a troop of girls on the mountains, whose sharp air gives their blood too brisk a circulation."

"Peace, blasphemer," said the Caliph; "speak not thus of her who, over her mountains, leads my heart a willing captive; contrive rather that my eyes may be fixed upon hers, that I may respire her sweet breath, as she bounds panting along these delightful wilds!" On saying these words Vathek extended his arms towards the hill, and directing his eyes with an anxiety unknown to him before, endeavoured to keep within view the object that enthralled his soul; but her course was as difficult to follow as the flight of one of those beautiful blue butterflies of Cashmere, which are at once so volatile and rare.

The Caliph, not satisfied with seeing, wished also to hear Nouronihar, and eagerly turned to catch the sound of her voice; at last he distinguished her whispering to one of her companions behind the thicket



from whence she had thrown the jasmine: "A Caliph it must be owned is a fine thing to see, but my little Gulchenrouz is much more amiable; one lock of his hair is of more value to me than the richest embroidery of the Indies; I had rather that his teeth should mischievously press my finger than the richest ring of the imperial treasure; where have you left him, Sutlememe? and why is he now not here?"

The agitated Caliph still wished to hear more, but she immediately retired with all her attendants; the fond monarch pursued her with his eyes till she was gone out of sight, and then continued like a bewildered and benighted traveller, from whom the clouds had obscured the constellation that guided his way; the curtain of night seemed dropped before him; everything appeared discoloured; the falling waters filled his soul with dejection, and his tears trickled down the jasmines he had caught from Nouronihar, and placed in his inflamed bosom; he snatched up a shining pebble, to remind him of the scene where he felt the first tumults of love. Two hours were elapsed, and evening drew on before he could resolve to depart from the place; he often, but in vain, attempted to go; a soft languor enervated the powers of his mind; extending himself on the brink of the stream he turned his eyes towards the blue summits of the mountain and exclaimed: "What concealest thou behind thee? what is passing in thy solitudes? Whither is she gone? O heaven! perhaps she is now wandering in thy grottos, with her happy Gulchenrouz!"

In the meantime the damps began to descend, and

the Emir, solicitous for the health of the Caliph, ordered the imperial litter to be brought. Vathek, absorbed in his reveries, was imperceptibly removed and conveyed back to the saloon that received him the evening before.

But let us leave the Caliph, immersed in his new passion, and attend Nouronihar beyond the rocks, where she had again joined her beloved Gulchenrouz. This Gulchenrouz was the son of Ali Hassan, brother to the Emir, and the most delicate and lovely creature in the world. Ali Hassan, who had been absent ten years on a voyage to the unknown seas, committed at his departure this child, the only survivor of many, to the care and protection of his brother. Gulchenrouz could write in various characters with precision, and paint upon vellum the most elegant arabesques that fancy could devise; his sweet voice accompanied the lute in the most enchanting manner, and when he sung the loves of Megnoun and Leileh, or some unfortunate lovers of ancient days, tears insensibly overflowed the cheeks of his auditors; the verses he composed (for, like Megnoun, he too was a poet) inspired that unresisting languor so frequently fatal to the female heart; the women all doted upon him; for though he had passed his thirteenth year, they still detained him in the harem; his dancing was light as the gossamer waved by the zephyrs of spring, but his arms which twined so gracefully with those of the young girls in the dance, could neither dart the lance in the chase, nor curb the steeds that pastured his uncle's domains. The bow, however, he drew with a certain aim, and would have excelled his competitors

in the race, could he have broken the ties that bound him to Nouronihar.

The two brothers had mutually engaged their children to each other, and Nouronihar loved her cousin more than her eyes; both had the same tastes and amusements, the same long, languishing looks, the same tresses, the same fair complexions, and when Gulchenrouz appeared in the dress of his cousin he seemed to be more feminine than even herself. If at any time he left the harem to visit Fakreddin, it was with all the bashfulness of a fawn that consciously ventures from the lair of its dam; he was, however, wanton enough to mock the solemn old greybeards to whom he was subject, though sure to be rated without mercy in return; whenever this happened he would plunge into the recesses of the harem, and sobbing take refuge in the arms of Nouronihar, who loved even his faults beyond the virtues of others.

It fell out this evening that, after leaving the Caliph in the meadow, she ran with Gulchenrouz over the green sward of the mountain that sheltered the vale where Fakreddin had chosen to reside. The sun was dilated on the edge of the horizon; and the young people, whose fancies were lively and inventive, imagined they beheld in the gorgeous clouds of the west the domes of Shadukiam and Ambreabad, where the Peries have fixed their abode. Nouronihar, sitting on the slope of the hill, supported on her knees the perfumed head of Gulchenrouz; the air was calm, and no sound stirred but the voices of other young girls, who were drawing cool water from the streams below. The unexpected arrival of the Caliph,

and the splendour that marked his appearance, had already filled with emotion the ardent soul of Nouronihar ; her vanity irresistibly prompted her to pique the Prince's attention, and this she before took good care to effect whilst he picked up the jasmine she had thrown upon him. But when Gulchenrouz asked after the flowers he had culled for her bosom, Nouronihar was all in confusion ; she hastily kissed his forehead, arose in a flutter, and walked with unequal steps on the border of the precipice. Night advanced, and the pure gold of the setting sun had yielded to a sanguine red, the glow of which, like the reflection of a burning furnace, flushed Nouronihar's animated countenance. Gulchenrouz, alarmed at the agitation of his cousin, said to her with a supplicating accent :

“Let us be gone ; the sky looks portentous, the tamarisks tremble more than common, and the raw wind chills my very heart ; come ! let us be gone, 'tis a melancholy night !”

Then, taking hold of her hand, he drew it towards the path he besought her to go. Nouronihar unconsciously followed the attraction, for a thousand strange imaginations occupied her spirit ; she passed the large round of honeysuckles, her favourite resort, without ever vouchsafing it a glance, yet Gulchenrouz could not help snatching off a few shoots in his way, though he ran as if a wild beast were behind.

The young females seeing him approach in such haste, and according to custom expecting a dance, instantly assembled in a circle and took each other by the hand ; but Gulchenrouz, coming up out of breath, fell down at once on the grass. This accident

struck with consternation the whole of this frolicsome party ; whilst Nouronihar, half distracted, and overcome, both by the violence of her exercise and the tumult of her thoughts, sunk feebly down at his side, cherished his cold hands in her bosom, and chafed his temples with a fragrant unguent. At length he came to himself, and wrapping up his head in the robe of his cousin, entreated that she would not return to the harem : he was afraid of being snapped at by Shaban his tutor, a wrinkled old eunuch of a surly disposition ; for having interrupted the stated walk of Nouronihar, he dreaded lest the churl should take it amiss. The whole of this sprightly group, sitting round upon a mossy knoll, began to entertain themselves with various pastimes, whilst their superintendents the eunuchs were gravely conversing at a distance. The nurse of the Emir's daughter observing her pupil sit ruminating with her eyes on the ground, endeavoured to amuse her with diverting tales, to which Gulchenrouz, who had already forgotten his inquietudes, listened with breathless attention ; he laughed, he clapped his hands, and passed a hundred little tricks on the whole of the company, without omitting the eunuchs, whom he provoked to run after him, in spite of their age and decrepitude.

During these occurrences the moon arose, the wind subsided, and the evening became so serene and inviting that a resolution was taken to sup on the spot. Sutlememe, who excelled in dressing a salad, having filled large bowls of porcelain with eggs of small birds, curds turned with citron juice, slices of cucumber, and the inmost leaves of delicate herbs,

handed it round from one to another, and gave each their shares in a large spoon of Cocknos. Gulchenrouz, nestling as usual in the bosom of Nouronihar, pouted out his vermilion little lips against the offer of Suttle-meme, and would take it only from the hands of his cousin, on whose mouth he hung like a bee inebriated with the quintessence of flowers. One of the eunuchs ran to fetch melons, whilst others were employed in showering down almonds from the branches that overhung this amiable party.

In the midst of this festive scene there appeared a light on the top of the highest mountain, which attracted the notice of every eye; this light was not less bright than the moon when at full, and might have been taken for her, had it not been that the moon was already risen. The phenomenon occasioned a general surprise, and no one could conjecture the cause; it could not be a fire, for the light was clear and bluish, nor had meteors ever been seen of that magnitude or splendour. This strange light faded for a moment, and immediately renewed its brightness; it first appeared motionless at the foot of the rock, whence it darted in an instant to sparkle in a thicket of palm-trees; from thence it glided along the torrent, and at last fixed in a glen that was narrow and dark.

The moment it had taken its direction, Gulchenrouz, whose heart always trembled at anything sudden or rare, drew Nouronihar by the robe, and anxiously requested her to return to the harem; the women were importunate in seconding the entreaty, but the curiosity of the Emir's daughter pre-



vailed ; she not only refused to go back, but resolved at all hazards to pursue the appearance. Whilst they were debating what was best to be done, the light shot forth so dazzling a blaze, that they all fled away shrieking ; Nouronihar followed them a few steps, but coming to the turn of a little by-path, stopped, and went back alone ; as she ran with an alertness peculiar to herself, it was not long before she came to the place where they had just been supping. The globe of fire now appeared stationary in the glen, and burned in majestic stillness. Nouronihar, compressing her hands upon her bosom, hesitated for some moments to advance ; the solitude of her situation was new, the silence of the night awful, and every object inspired sensations which till then she never had felt ; the affright of Gulchenrouz recurred to her mind, and she a thousand times turned to go back, but this luminous appearance was always before her ; urged on by an irresistible impulse she continued to approach it, in defiance of every obstacle that opposed her progress.

At length she arrived at the opening of the glen ; but, instead of coming up to the light, she found herself surrounded by darkness, excepting that at a considerable distance a faint spark glimmered by fits. She stopped a second time ; the sound of waterfalls mingling their murmurs, the hollow rustlings amongst the palm-branches, and the funereal screams of the birds from their rifted trunks, all conspired to fill her with terror ; she imagined every moment that she trod on some venomous reptile ; all the stories of malignant Dives and dismal Goules thronged into her

memory; but her curiosity was, notwithstanding, more predominant than her fears; she therefore firmly entered a winding track that led towards the spark, but being a stranger to the path, she had not gone far till she began to repent of her rashness.

“Alas!” said she, “that I were but in those secure and illuminated apartments where my evenings glided on with Gulchenrouz! Dear child! how would thy heart flutter with terror wert thou wandering in these wild solitudes like me!” At the close of this apostrophe she regained her road, and coming to steps hewn out in the rock, ascended them undismayed; the light, which was now gradually enlarging, appeared above her on the summit of the mountain; at length she distinguished a plaintive and melodious union of voices, proceeding from a sort of cavern, that resembled the dirges which are sung over tombs; a sound likewise, like that which arises from the filling of baths, at the same time struck her ear; she continued ascending, and discovered large wax torches in full blaze planted here and there in the fissures of the rock; this preparation filled her with fear, whilst the subtle and potent odour which the torches exhaled caused her to sink almost lifeless at the entrance of the grot.

Casting her eyes within in this kind of trance, she beheld a large cistern of gold filled with a water, whose vapour distilled on her face a dew of the essence of roses; a soft symphony resounded through the grot; on the sides of the cistern she noticed appendages of royalty, diadems and feathers of the heron, all sparkling with carbuncles; whilst her atten-

tion was fixed on this display of magnificence, the music ceased, and a voice instantly demanded :

“For what monarch were these torches kindled, this bath prepared, and these habiliments, which belong not only to the sovereigns of the earth, but even to the Talismanic Powers?”

To which a second voice answered : “They are for the charming daughter of the Emir Fakreddin.”

“What,” replied the first, “for that trifler, who consumes her time with a giddy child, immersed in softness, and who at best can make but an enervated husband?”

“And can she,” rejoined the other voice, “be amused with such empty trifles, whilst the Caliph, the sovereign of the world, he who is destined to enjoy the treasures of the pre-adamite Sultans, a prince six feet high, and whose eyes pervade the inmost soul of a female, is inflamed with the love of her. No! she will be wise enough to answer that passion alone that can aggrandise her glory; no doubt she will, and despise the puppet of her fancy. Then all the riches this place contains, as well as the carbuncle of Giamschid, shall be hers.”

“You judge right,” returned the first voice, “and I haste to Istakar to prepare the palace of subterranean fire for the reception of the bridal pair.”

The voices ceased, the torches were extinguished, the most entire darkness succeeded, and Nouronihar, recovering with a start, found herself reclined on a sofa in the harem of her father. She clapped her hands, and immediately came together Gulchenrouz and her women, who, in despair at having lost her,

had despatched eunuchs to seek her in every direction; Shaban appeared with the rest, and began to reprimand her with an air of consequence:

"Little impertinent," said he, "whence got you false keys? or are you beloved of some genius that hath given you a picklock? I will try the extent of your power; come, to your chamber! through the two sky-lights; and expect not the company of Gulchenrouz; be expeditious! I will shut you up in the double tower."

At these menaces Nouronihar indignantly raised her head, opened on Shaban her black eyes, which, since the important dialogue of the enchanted grot, were considerably enlarged, and said: "Go, speak thus to slaves, but learn to reverence her who is born to give laws, and subject all to her power."

She was proceeding in the same style, but was interrupted by a sudden exclamation of "The Caliph! The Caliph!" The curtains at once were thrown open, and the slaves prostrate in double rows, whilst poor little Gulchenrouz hid himself beneath the elevation of a sofa. At first appeared a file of black eunuchs, trailing after them long trains of muslin embroidered with gold, and holding in their hands censers, which dispensed as they passed the grateful perfume of the wood of aloes; next marched Bababalouk with a solemn strut, and tossing his head as not overpleased at the visit; Vathek came close after, superbly robed, his gait was unembarrassed and noble, and his presence would have engaged admiration, though he had not been the sovereign of the world; he approached Nouronihar with a

throbbing heart, and seemed enraptured at the full effulgence of her radiant eyes, of which he had before caught but a few glimpses; but she instantly depressed them, and her confusion augmented her beauty.

Bababalouk, who was a thorough adept in coincidences of this nature, and knew that the worse game should be played with the best face, immediately made a signal for all to retire; and no sooner did he perceive beneath the sofa the little one's feet, than he drew him forth without ceremony, set him upon his shoulders, and lavished on him as he went off a thousand odious caresses; Gulchenrouz cried out, and resisted till his cheeks became the colour of the blossom of the pomegranate, and the tears that started into his eyes shot forth a gleam of indignation; he cast a significant glance at Nouronihar, which the Caliph noticing asked: "Is that then your Gulchenrouz?"

"Sovereign of the world!" answered she, "spare my cousin, whose innocence and gentleness deserve not your anger!"

"Take comfort," said Vathek, with a smile, "he is in good hands; Bababalouk is fond of children, and never goes without sweetmeats and comfits."

The daughter of Fakreddin was abashed, and suffered Gulchenrouz to be borne away without adding a word. The tumult of her bosom betrayed her confusion; and Vathek, becoming still more impassioned, gave a loose to his frenzy, which had only not subdued the last faint strugglings of reluctance, when the Emir suddenly bursting in,

threw his face upon the ground at the feet of the Caliph and said :

“Commander of the faithful! abase not yourself to the meanness of your slave.”

“No, Emir,” replied Vathek, “I raise her to an equality with myself; I declare her my wife, and the glory of your race shall extend from one generation to another.”

“Alas! my lord,” said Fakreddin, as he plucked off the honours of his beard, “cut short the days of your faithful servant, rather than force him to depart from his word. Nouronihar, as her hands evince, is solemnly promised to Gulchenrouz, the son of my brother Ali Hassan; they are united also in heart, their faith is mutually plighted, and affiances so sacred cannot be broken.”

“What then!” replied the Caliph bluntly, “would you surrender this divine beauty to a husband more womanish than herself? and can you imagine that I will suffer her charms to decay in hands so inefficient and nerveless? No! she is destined to live out her life within my embraces; such is my will; retire and disturb not the night I devote to the homage of her charms.”

The irritated Emir drew forth his *sabre*, presented it to Vathek, and stretching out his neck, said in a firm tone of voice: “Strike your unhappy host, my lord! he has lived long enough, since he hath seen the Prophet’s Vicegerent violate the rites of hospitality.”

At his uttering these words Nouronihar, unable to support any longer the conflict of her passions, sunk



down in a swoon. Vathek, both terrified for her life and furious at an opposition to his will, bade Fakreddin assist his daughter, and withdrew, darting his terrible look at the unfortunate Emir, who suddenly fell backward bathed in a sweat cold as the damp of death.

Gulchenrouz, who had escaped from the hands of Bababalouk, and was that instant returned, called out for help as loudly as he could, not having strength to afford it himself. Pale and panting, the poor child attempted to revive Nouronihar by caresses; and it happened that the thrilling warmth of his lips restored her to life. Fakreddin beginning also to recover from the look of the Caliph, with difficulty tottered to a seat, and after warily casting round his eye to see if this dangerous prince were gone, sent for Shaban and Sutlememe, and said to them apart:

“My friends! violent evils require as violent remedies; the Caliph has brought desolation and horror into my family, and how shall we resist his power? another of his looks will send me to my grave. Fetch then that narcotic powder which the Dervish brought me from Aracan; a dose of it, the effect of which will continue three days, must be administered to each of these children; the Caliph will believe them to be dead, for they will have all the appearance of death; we shall go as if to inter them in the cave of Meimoune, at the entrance of the great desert of sand, and near the cabin of my dwarfs. When all the spectators shall be withdrawn, you, Shaban, and four select eunuchs, shall convey them to the lake, where provision shall be ready to support them a

month; for one day allotted to the surprise this event will occasion, five to the tears, a fortnight to reflection, and the rest to prepare for renewing his progress, will, according to my calculation, fill up the whole time that Vathek will tarry, and I shall then be freed from his intrusion."

"Your plan," said Sutlememe, "is a good one, if it can but be effected. I have remarked that Nouronihar is well able to support the glances of the Caliph, and that he is far from being sparing of them to her; be assured, therefore, notwithstanding her fondness for Gulchenrouz, she will never remain quiet while she knows him to be here, unless we can persuade her that both herself and Gulchenrouz are really dead, and that they were conveyed to those rocks for a limited season to expiate the little faults of which their love was the cause; we will add that we killed ourselves in despair, and that your dwarfs, whom they never yet saw, will preach to them delectable sermons. I will engage that everything shall succeed to the bent of your wishes."

"Be it so!" said Fakreddin, "I approve your proposal; let us lose not a moment to give it effect."

They forthwith hastened to seek for the powder, which, being mixed in a sherbet, was immediately drunk by Gulchenrouz and Nouronihar. Within the space of an hour both were seized with violent palpitations, and a general numbness gradually ensued; they arose from the floor, where they had remained ever since the Caliph's departure, and ascending to the sofa, reclined themselves at full length upon it, clasped in each other's embraces.

“Cherish me, my dear Nouronihar!” said Gulchenrouz; “put thy hand upon my heart, for it feels as if it were frozen. Alas! thou art as cold as myself! hath the Caliph murdered us both with his terrible look?”

“I am dying!” cried she in a faltering voice; “press me closer, I am ready to expire!”

“Let us die then together,” answered the little Gulchenrouz, whilst his breast laboured with a convulsive sigh; “let me at least breathe forth my soul on thy lips!” They spoke no more, and became as dead.

Immediately the most piercing cries were heard through the harem, whilst Shaban and Sutlememe personated with great adroitness the parts of persons in despair. The Emir, who was sufficiently mortified to be forced into such untoward expedients, and had now for the first time made a trial of his powder, was under no necessity of counterfeiting grief. The slaves, who had flocked together from all quarters, stood motionless at the spectacle before them; all lights were extinguished save two lamps, which shed a wan glimmering over the faces of these lovely flowers, that seemed to be faded in the spring-time of life; funeral vestments were prepared, their bodies were washed with rose-water, their beautiful tresses were braided and incensed, and they were wrapped in simars whiter than alabaster. At the moment that their attendants were placing two wreaths of their favourite jasmines on their brows, the Caliph, who had just heard the tragical catastrophe, arrived; he looked not less pale and haggard than the ghouls

that wander at night among graves; forgetful of himself and every one else, he broke through the midst of the slaves, fell prostrate at the foot of the sofa, beat his bosom, called himself "atrocious murderer!" and invoked upon his head a thousand imprecations; with a trembling hand he raised the veil that covered the countenance of Nouronihar, and uttering a loud shriek, fell lifeless on the floor. The chief of the eunuchs dragged him off with horrible grimaces, and repeated as he went: "Ay, I foresaw she would play you some ungracious turn!"

No sooner was the Caliph gone than the Emir commanded biers to be brought, and forbade that any one should enter the harem. Every window was fastened, all instruments of music were broken, and the Imans began to recite their prayers; towards the close of this melancholy day Vathek sobbed in silence, for they had been forced to compose with anodynes his convulsions of rage and desperation.

At the dawn of the succeeding morning the wide folding doors of the palace were set open, and the funeral procession moved forward for the mountain. The wailful cries of "La Ilah illa Alla!" reached to the Caliph, who was eager to cicatrise himself and attend the ceremonial; nor could he have been dissuaded, had not his excessive weakness disabled him from walking; at the few first steps he fell on the ground, and his people were obliged to lay him on a bed, where he remained many days in such a state of insensibility as excited compassion in the Emir himself.

When the procession was arrived at the grot of

Meimoune, Shaban and Sutlememe dismissed the whole of the train, excepting the four confidential eunuchs who were appointed to remain. After resting some moments near the biers which had been left in the open air, they caused them to be carried to the brink of a small lake, whose banks were overgrown with a hoary moss; this was the great resort of herons and storks, which preyed continually on little blue fishes. The dwarfs instructed by the Emir soon repaired thither, and with the help of the eunuchs, began to construct cabins of rushes and reeds, a work in which they had admirable skill; a magazine also was contrived for provisions, with a small oratory for themselves, and a pyramid of wood, neatly piled, to furnish the necessary fuel, for the air was bleak in the hollows of the mountains.

At evening two fires were kindled on the brink of the lake, and the two lovely bodies, taken from their biers, were carefully deposited upon a bed of dried leaves within the same cabin. The dwarfs began to recite the Koran with their clear shrill voices, and Shaban and Sutlememe stood at some distance, anxiously waiting the effects of the powder. At length Nouronihar and Gulchenrouz faintly stretched out their arms, and gradually opening their eyes, began to survey with looks of increasing amazement every object around them; they even attempted to rise, but for want of strength fell back again; Sutlememe on this administered a cordial, which the Emir had taken care to provide.

Gulchenrouz, thoroughly aroused, sneezed out aloud, and raising himself with an effort that ex-

pressed his surprise, left the cabin, and inhaled the fresh air with the greatest avidity.

"Yes," said he, "I breathe again! again do I exist! I hear sounds! I behold a firmament spangled over with stars!"

Nouronihar, catching these beloved accents, extricated herself from the leaves, and ran to clasp Gulchenrouz to her bosom. The first objects she remarked were their long simars, their garlands of flowers, and their naked feet; she hid her face in her hands to reflect; the vision of the enchanted bath, the despair of her father, and more vividly than both, the majestic figure of Vathek recurred to her memory; she recollected also that herself and Gulchenrouz had been sick and dying; but all these images bewildered her mind. Not knowing where she was, she turned her eyes on all sides, as if to recognise the surrounding scene; this singular lake, those flames reflected from its glassy surface, the pale hues of its banks, the romantic cabins, the bulrushes that sadly waved their drooping heads, the storks whose melancholy cries blended with the shrill voices of the dwarfs, everything conspired to persuade them that the Angel of Death had opened the portal of some other world.

Gulchenrouz on his part, lost in wonder, clung to the neck of his cousin: he believed himself in the region of phantoms, and was terrified at the silence she preserved; at length addressing her:

"Speak," said he, "where are we? do you not see those spectres that are stirring the burning coals? are they Monker and Nakir, come to throw us into



them? does the fatal bridge cross this lake, whose solemn stillness perhaps conceals from us an abyss, in which for whole ages we shall be doomed incessantly to sink?"

"No, my children!" said Sutlememe, going towards them, "take comfort! the exterminating Angel, who conducted our souls hither after yours, hath assured us that the chastisement of your indolent and voluptuous life shall be restricted to a certain series of years, which you must pass in this dreary abode, where the sun is scarcely visible, and where the soil yields neither fruits nor flowers. These," continued she, pointing to the dwarfs, "will provide for our wants, for souls so mundane as ours retain too strong a tincture of their earthly extraction; instead of meats your food will be nothing but rice, and your bread shall be moistened in the fogs that brood over the surface of the lake."

At this desolating prospect the poor children burst into tears, and prostrated themselves before the dwarfs, who perfectly supported their characters and delivered an excellent discourse of a customary length upon the sacred camel, which after a thousand years was to convey them to the paradise of the faithful.

The sermon being ended, and ablutions performed, they praised Alla and the prophet, supped very indifferently and retired to their withered leaves. Nouronihar and her little cousin consoled themselves on finding that, though dead, they yet lay in one cabin. Having slept well before, the remainder of the night was spent in conversation on what had befallen them,

and both, from a dread of apparitions, betook themselves for protection to one another's arms.

In the morning, which was lowering and rainy, the dwarfs mounted high poles like minarets, and called them to prayers; the whole congregation, which consisted of Sutlememe, Shaban, the four eunuchs and some storks, were already assembled. The two children came forth from their cabin with a slow and dejected pace; as their minds were in a tender and melancholy mood their devotions were performed with fervour. No sooner were they finished than Gulchenrouz demanded of Sutlememe and the rest, "how they happened to die so opportunely for his cousin and himself?"

"We killed ourselves," returned Sutlememe, "in despair at your death."

On this, said Nouronihar, who, notwithstanding what was past, had not yet forgotten her vision: "And the Caliph! is he also dead of his grief? and will he likewise come hither?"

The dwarfs, who were prepared with an answer, most demurely replied: "Vathek is damned beyond all redemption!"

"I readily believe so," said Gulchenrouz, "and am glad from my heart to hear it; for I am convinced it was his horrible look that sent us hither to listen to sermons and mess upon rice."

One week passed away on the side of the lake unmarked by any variety; Nouronihar ruminating on the grandeur of which death had deprived her, and Gulchenrouz applying to prayers and to panniers, along with the dwarfs, who infinitely pleased him.

Whilst this scene of innocence was exhibiting in the mountains, the Caliph presented himself to the Emir in a new light ; the instant he recovered the use of his senses, with a voice that made Bababalouk quake, he thundered out : " Perfidious Giaour ! I renounce thee for ever ! it is thou who hast slain my beloved Nouronihar ! and I supplicate the pardon of Mahomet, who would have preserved her to me had I been more wise ; let water be brought to perform my ablutions, and let the pious Fakreddin be called to offer up his prayers with mine, and reconcile me to him ; afterwards we will go together and visit the sepulchre of the unfortunate Nouronihar ; I am resolved to become a hermit, and consume the residue of my days on this mountain, in hope of expiating my crimes."

Nouronihar was not altogether so content, for though she felt a fondness for Gulchenrouz, who, to augment the attachment, had been left at full liberty with her, yet she still regarded him as but a bauble, that bore no competition with the carbuncle of Giamschid. At times she indulged doubts on the mode of her being, and scarcely could believe that the dead had all the wants and the whims of the living. To gain satisfaction, however, on so perplexing a topic, she arose one morning whilst all were asleep, with a breathless caution, from the side of Gulchenrouz, and after having given him a soft kiss, began to follow the windings of the lake till it terminated with a rock, whose top was accessible though lofty ; this she clambered up with considerable toil, and having reached the summit, set forward in a run, like a doe

that unwittingly follows her hunter; though she skipped along with the alertness of an antelope, yet at intervals she was forced to desist and rest beneath the tamarisks to recover her breath. Whilst she, thus reclined, was occupied with her little reflections on the apprehension that she had some knowledge of the place, Vathek, who finding himself that morning but ill at ease had gone forth before the dawn, presented himself on a sudden to her view; motionless with surprise, he durst not approach the figure before him; which lay shrouded up in a simar, extended on the ground, trembling and pale, but yet lovely to behold. At length Nouronihar, with a mixture of pleasure and affliction, raising her fine eyes to him, said: "My lord! are you come hither to eat rice and hear sermons with me?"

"Beloved phantom!" cried Vathek; "dost thou speak? hast thou the same graceful form? the same radiant features? art thou palpable likewise?" and eagerly embracing her, added: "Here are limbs and a bosom animated with a gentle warmth! what can such a prodigy mean?"

Nouronihar with diffidence answered: "You know, my lord, that I died on the night you honoured me with your visit; my cousin maintains it was from one of your glances, but I cannot believe him; for to me they seem not so dreadful. Gulchenrouz died with me, and we were both brought into a region of desolation, where we are fed with a wretched diet. If you be dead also, and are come hither to join us, I pity your lot; for you will be stunned with the noise of the dwarfs and the storks; besides, it is mortifying

in the extreme that you, as well as myself, should have lost the treasures of the subterranean palace."

At the mention of the subterranean palace the Caliph suspended his caresses, which indeed had proceeded pretty far, to seek from Nouronihar an explanation of her meaning. She then recapitulated her vision, what immediately followed, and the history of her pretended death, adding also a description of the place of expiation from whence she had fled, and all in a manner that would have extorted his laughter, had not the thoughts of Vathek been too deeply engaged. No sooner, however, had she ended, than he again clasped her to his bosom and said :

"Light of my eyes! the mystery is unravelled; we both are alive! your father is a cheat, who, for the sake of dividing, hath deluded us both; and the Giaour, whose design, as far as I can discover, is that we shall proceed together, seems scarce a whit better; it shall be some time at least before he find us in his palace of fire. Your lovely little person in my estimation is far more precious than all the treasures of the pre-adamite sultans, and I wish to possess it at pleasure, and in open day, for many a moon, before I go to burrow underground like a mole. Forget this little trifle, Gulchenrouz, and"—

"Ah, my lord!" interposed Nouronihar, "let me entreat that you do him no evil."

"No, no!" replied Vathek, "I have already bid you forbear to alarm yourself for him; he has been brought up too much on milk and sugar to stimulate my jealousy; we will leave him with the dwarfs, who by the by are my old acquaintances; their company

will suit him far better than yours. As to other matters, I will return no more to your father's; I want not to have my ears dinned by him and his dotards with the violation of the rites of hospitality; as if it were less an honour for you to espouse the sovereign of the world than a girl dressed up like a boy!"

Nouronihar could find nothing to oppose in a discourse so eloquent; she only wished the amorous monarch had discovered more ardour for the carbuncle of Giamschid; but flattered herself it would gradually increase, and therefore yielded to his will with the most bewitching submission.

When the Caliph judged it proper he called for Bababalouk, who was asleep in the cave of Meimoune, and dreaming that the phantom of Nouronihar having mounted him once more on her swing, had just given him such a jerk, that he one moment soared above the mountains, and the next sunk into the abyss; starting from his sleep at the voice of his master, he ran gasping for breath, and had nearly fallen backward at the sight, as he believed, of the spectre by whom he had so lately been haunted in his dream.

"Ah, my lord!" cried he, recoiling ten steps, and covering his eyes with both hands: "do you then perform the office of a goul! 'tis true you have dug up the dead, yet hope not to make her your prey; for after all she hath caused me to suffer she is even wicked enough to prey upon you."

"Cease thy folly," said Vathek, "and thou shalt soon be convinced that it is Nouronihar herself, alive



and well, whom I clasp to my breast; go only and pitch my tents in the neighbouring valley; there will I fix my abode with this beautiful tulip, whose colours I soon shall restore; there exert thy best endeavours to procure whatever can augment the enjoyments of life, till I shall disclose to thee more of my will."

The news of so unlucky an event soon reached the ears of the Emir, who abandoned himself to grief and despair, and began, as did all his old greybeards, to begrime his visage with ashes. A total supineness ensued, travellers were no longer entertained, no more plaisters were spread, and instead of the charitable activity that had distinguished this asylum, the whole of its inhabitants exhibited only faces of a half cubit long, and uttered groans that accorded with their forlorn situation.

Though Fakreddin bewailed his daughter as lost to him for ever, yet Gulchenrouz was not forgotten. He despatched immediate instruction to Sutlememe, Shaban, and the drawfs, enjoining them not to undeceive the child in respect to his state, but, under some pretence, to convey him far from the lofty rock at the extremity of the lake, to a place which he should appoint, as safer from danger; for he suspected that Vathek intended him evil.

Gulchenrouz in the meanwhile was filled with amazement at not finding his cousin; nor were the dwarfs at all less surprised; but Sutlememe, who had more penetration, immediately guessed what had happened. Gulchenrouz was amused with the delusive hope of once more embracing Nouronihar

in the interior recesses of the mountains, where the ground, strewed over with orange blossoms and jasmines, offered beds much more inviting than the withered leaves in their cabin, where they might accompany with their voices the sounds of their lutes, and chase butterflies in concert. Sutlememe was far gone in this sort of description, when one of the four eunuchs beckoned her aside, to apprise her of the arrival of a messenger from their fraternity, who had explained the secret of the flight of Nouronihar, and brought the commands of the Emir. A council with Shaban and the dwarfs was immediately held; their baggage being stowed in consequence of it, they embarked in a shallop, and quietly sailed with the little one, who acquiesced in all their proposals; their voyage proceeded in the same manner till they came to the place where the lake sinks beneath the hollow of the rock; but as soon as the bark had entered it, and Gulchenrouz found himself surrounded with darkness, he was seized with a dreadful consternation, and incessantly uttered the most piercing outcries; for he now was persuaded he should actually be damned for having taken too many little freedoms in his lifetime with his cousin.

But let us return to the Caliph, and her who ruled over his heart. Bababalouk had pitched the tents, and closed up the extremities of the valley with magnificent screens of India cloth, which were guarded by Ethiopian slaves with their drawn sabres; to preserve the verdure of this beautiful enclosure in its natural freshness, the white eunuchs went continually round it with their red water vessels. The

waving of fans was heard near the imperial pavilion, where, by the voluptuous light that glowed through the muslins, the Caliph enjoyed at full view all the attractions of Nouronihar. Inebriated with delight, he was all ear to her charming voice which accompanied the lute; while she was not less captivated with his descriptions of Samarah and the tower of wonders, but especially with his relation of the adventure of the ball, and the chasm of the Giaour with its ebony portal.

In this manner they conversed for a day and a night; they bathed together in a basin of black marble, which admirably relieved the fairness of Nouronihar. Bababalouk, whose good graces this beauty had regained, spared no attention that their repasts might be served up with the minutest exactness; some exquisite rarity was ever placed before them; and he sent even to Schiraz for that fragrant and delicious wine, which had been hoarded up in bottles prior to the birth of Mahomet; he had excavated little ovens in the rock to bake the nice manchets which were prepared by the hands of Nouronihar, from whence they had derived a flavour so grateful to Vathek, that he regarded the ragouts of his other wives as entirely maukish; whilst they would have died at the Emir's of chagrin, at finding themselves so neglected, if Fakreddin, notwithstanding his resentment, had not taken pity upon them.

The Sultana Dilara, who till then had been the favourite, took this dereliction of the Caliph to heart with a vehemence natural to her character; for during her continuance in favour, she had imbibed from

Vathek many of his extravagant fancies, and was fired with impatience to behold the superb tombs of Istakar, and the palace of forty columns; besides, having been brought up amongst the Magi, she had fondly cherished the idea of the Caliph's devoting himself to the worship of fire; thus his voluptuous and desultory life with her rival was to her a double source of affliction. The transient piety of Vathek had occasioned her some serious alarms, but the present was an evil of far greater magnitude; she resolved, therefore, without hesitation, to write to Carathis, and acquaint her that all things went ill; that they had eaten, slept, and revelled at an old Emir's, whose sanctity was very formidable, and that after all, the prospect of possessing the treasures of the pre-adamite Sultans was no less remote than before. This letter was entrusted to the care of two woodmen who were at work on one of the great forests of the mountains, and being acquainted with the shortest cuts, arrived in ten days at Samarah.

The Princess Carathis was engaged at chess with Morakanabad, when the arrival of these wood-fellers was announced. She, after some weeks of Vathek's absence, had forsaken the upper regions of her tower, because everything appeared in confusion among the stars, whom she consulted relative to the fate of her son. In vain did she renew her fumigations, and extend herself on the roof to obtain mystic visions; nothing more could she see in her dreams than pieces of brocade, nosegays of flowers, and other unmeaning gewgaws. These disappointments had thrown her into a state of dejection, which no drug in her power

was sufficient to remove; her only resource was in Morakanabad, who was a good man, and endowed with a decent share of confidence, yet whilst in her company he never thought himself on roses.

No person knew aught of Vathek, and a thousand ridiculous stories were propagated at his expense. The eagerness of Carathis may be easily guessed at receiving the letter, as well as her rage at reading the dissolute conduct of her son. "Is it so?" said she; "either I will perish, or Vathek shall enter the palace of fire. Let me expire in flames, provided he may reign on the throne of Soliman!" Having said this, and whirled herself round in a magical manner, which struck Morakanabad with such terror as caused him to recoil, she ordered her great camel Alboufaki to be brought, and the hideous Nerkes with the unrelenting Cafour to attend. "I require no other retinue," said she to Morakanabad; "I am going on affairs of emergency, a truce therefore to parade! Take you care of the people, fleece them well in my absence; for we shall expend large sums, and one knows not what may betide."

The night was uncommonly dark, and a pestilential blast ravaged the plain of Catoul that would have deterred any other traveller, however urgent the call; but Carathis enjoyed most whatever filled others with dread. Nerkes concurred in opinion with her, and Cafour had a particular predilection for a pestilence. In the morning this accomplished caravan, with the wood-fellers who directed their route, halted, on the edge of an extensive marsh, from whence so noxious a vapour arose as would have destroyed any

animal but Alboufaki, who naturally inhaled these malignant fogs. The peasants entreated their convoy not to sleep in this place.

"To sleep," cried Carathis, "what an excellent thought! I never sleep but for visions; and as to my attendants, their occupations are too many to close the only eye they each have."

The poor peasants, who were not overpleased with their party, remained open-mouthed with surprise.

Carathis alighted, as well as her nègresses, and severally stripping off their outer garments, they all ran in their drawers, to cull from those spots where the sun shone fiercest the venomous plants that grew on the marsh; this provision was made for the family of the Emir, and whoever might retard the expedition to Istakar. The woodmen were overcome with fear when they beheld these three horrible phantoms run, and, not much relishing the company of Alboufaki, stood aghast at the command of Carathis to set forward, notwithstanding it was noon, and the heat fierce enough to calcine even rocks. In spite, however, of every remonstrance, they were forced implicitly to submit.

Alboufaki, who delighted in solitude, constantly snorted whenever he perceived himself near a habitation; and Carathis, who was apt to spoil him with indulgence, as constantly turned him aside, so that the peasants were precluded from procuring subsistence; for the milch goats and ewes, which Providence had sent towards the district they traversed, to refresh travellers with their milk, all fled at the sight of the



hideous animal and his strange riders. As to Carathis, she needed no common aliment, for her invention had previously furnished her with an opiate to stay her stomach, some of which she imparted to her mutes.

At the fall of night Alboufaki, making a sudden stop, stamped with his foot, which to Carathis, who understood his paces, was a certain indication that she was near the confines of some cemetery. The moon shed a bright light on the spot, which served to discover a long wall, with a large door in it standing ajar, and so high that Alboufaki might easily enter. The miserable guides, who perceived their end approaching, humbly implored Carathis, as she had now so good an opportunity, to inter them, and immediately gave up the ghost. Nerkes and Cafour, whose wit was of a style peculiar to themselves, were by no means parsimonious of it on the folly of these poor people, nor could anything have been found more suited to their tastes than the site of the burying-ground, and the sepulchres which its precincts contained ; there were at least two thousand of them on the declivity of a hill ; some in the form of pyramids, others like columns, and in short the variety of their shapes was endless. Carathis was too much immersed in her sublime contemplations to stop at the view, charming as it appeared in her eyes ; pondering the advantages that might accrue from her present situation, she could not forbear to exclaim :

“ So beautiful a cemetery must be haunted by ghouls ! and they want not for intelligence ; having heedlessly suffered my guides to expire, I will apply

for directions to them, and as an inducement will invite them to regale on these fresh corpses."

After this short soliloquy she beckoned to Nerkes and Cafour, and made signs with her fingers, as much as to say, "Go, knock against the sides of the tombs, and strike up your delightful warblings, that are so like to those of the guests whose company I wish to obtain."

The negresses, full of joy at the behests of their mistress, and promising themselves much pleasure from the society of the gouls, went with an air of conquest, and began their knockings at the tombs; as their strokes were repeated a hollow noise was heard in the earth, the surface hove up into heaps, and the gouls on all sides protruded their noses, to inhale the effluvia which the carcasses of the woodmen began to emit.

They assembled before a sarcophagus of white marble, where Carathis was seated between the bodies of her miserable guides; the princess received her visitants with distinguished politeness, and when supper was ended, proceeded with them to business. Having soon learnt from them everything she wished to discover, it was her intention to set forward forthwith on her journey, but her negresses, who were forming tender connections with the gouls, importuned her with all their fingers to wait at least till the dawn. Carathis, however, being chastity in the abstract, and an implacable enemy to love and repose, at once rejected their prayer, mounted Alboufaki, and commanded them to take their seats in a moment; four days and four nights she continued

her route, without turning to the right hand or left ; on the fifth she traversed the mountains and half-burnt forests, and arrived on the sixth before the beautiful screens which concealed from all eyes the voluptuous wanderings of her son.

It was daybreak, and the guards were snoring on their posts in careless security, when the rough trot of Alboufaki awoke them in consternation. Imagining that a group of spectres ascended from the abyss was approaching, they all without ceremony took to their heels.

Vathek was at that instant with Nouronihar in the bath, hearing tales, and laughing at Bababalouk who related them ; but no sooner did the outcry of his guards reach him, than he flounced from the water like a carp, and as soon threw himself back at the sight of Carathis, who, advancing with her negresses upon Alboufaki, broke through the muslin awnings and veils of the pavilion ; at this sudden apparition Nouronihar (for she was not at all times free from remorse) fancied that the moment of celestial vengeance was come, and clung about the Caliph in amorous despondence.

Carathis, still seated on her camel, foamed with indignation at the spectacle which obtruded itself on her chaste view ; she thundered forth without check or mercy : "Thou double-headed and four-legged monster ! what means all this winding and writhing ? art thou not ashamed to be seen grasping this limber sapling, in preference to the sceptre of the pre-adamite Sultans ? is it then for this paltry doxy that thou hast violated the conditions in the parchment

of our Giaour? is it on her thou hast lavished thy precious moments? is this the fruit of the knowledge I have taught thee? is this the end of thy journey? tear thyself from the arms of this little simpleton, drown her in the water before me, and instantly follow my guidance."

In the first ebullition of his fury Vathek resolved to make a skeleton of Alboufaki, and to stuff the skins of Carathis and her blacks; but the ideas of the Giaour, the palace of Istakar, the sabres and the talismans, flashing before his imagination with the simultaneousness of lightning, he became more moderate, and said to his mother, in a civil but decisive tone: "Dread lady! you shall be obeyed, but I will not drown Nouronihar; she is sweeter to me than a Myrabolan comfit, and is enamoured of carbuncles, especially that of Giamschid, which hath also been promised to be conferred upon her; she therefore shall go along with us, for I intend to repose with her beneath the canopies of Soliman; I can sleep no more without her."

"Be it so!" replied Carathis, alighting, and at the same time committing Alboufaki to the charge of her women.

Nouronihar, who had not yet quitted her hold, began to take courage, and said with an accent of fondness to the Caliph: "Dear sovereign of my soul! I will follow thee, if it be thy will, beyond the Kaf in the land of the Afrits; I will not hesitate to climb for thee the nest of the Simurgh, who, this lady excepted, is the most awful of created existences."

"We have here then," subjoined Carathis, "a girl both of courage and science!"

Nouronihar had certainly both; but notwithstanding all her firmness, she could not help casting back a look of regret upon the graces of her little Gulchenrouz, and the days of tenderness she had participated with him; she even dropped a few tears, which Carathis observed, and inadvertently breathed out with a sigh: "Alas! my gentle cousin! what will become of him?"

Vathek at this apostrophe knitted up his brows, and Carathis inquired what it could mean?

"She is preposterously sighing after a stripling with languishing eyes and soft hair, who loves her," said the Caliph.

"Where is he?" asked Carathis. "I must be acquainted with this pretty child; for," added she, lowering her voice, "I design before I depart to regain the favour of the Giaour; there is nothing so delicious in his estimation as the heart of a delicate boy, palpitating with the first tumults of love."

Vathek, as he came from the bath, commanded Babalouk to collect the women and other movables of his harem, embody his troops, and hold himself in readiness to march in three days; whilst Carathis retired alone to a tent, where the Giaour solaced her with encouraging visions; but at length waking, she found at her feet Nerkes and Cafour, who informed her by their signs, that having led Alboufaki to the borders of a lake, to browse on some moss that looked tolerably venomous, they had discovered cer-

tain blue fishes of the same kind with those in the reservoir on the top of the tower.

"Ah! ha!" said she, "I will go thither to them; these fish are past doubt of a species that, by a small operation, I can render oracular; they may tell me where this little Gulchenrouz is, whom I am bent upon sacrificing." Having thus spoken she immediately set out with her swarthy retinue.

It being but seldom that time is lost in the accomplishment of a wicked enterprise, Carathis and her negresses soon arrived at the lake, where, after burning the magical drugs with which they were always provided, they, stripping themselves naked, waded to their chins, Nerkes and Cafour waving torches around them, and Carathis pronouncing her barbarous incantations. The fishes with one accord thrust forth their heads from the water, which was violently rippled by the flutter of their fins, and at length finding themselves constrained by the potency of the charm, they opened their piteous mouths, and said: "From gills to tail we are yours, what seek ye to know?"

"Fishes," answered she, "I conjure you, by your glittering scales, tell me where now is Gulchenrouz?"

"Beyond the rock," replied the shoal in full chorus; "will this content you? for we do not delight in expanding our mouths."

"It will," returned the princess; "I am not to learn that you like not long conversations; I will leave you therefore to repose, though I had other questions to propound." The instant she had spoken the water became smooth, and the fishes at once disappeared.



Carathis, inflated with the venom of her projects, strode hastily over the rock, and found the amiable Gulchenrouz asleep in an arbour, whilst the two dwarfs were watching at his side, and ruminating their accustomed prayers. These diminutive personages possessed the gift of divining whenever an enemy to good Mussulmans approached; thus they anticipated the arrival of Carathis, who, stopping short, said to herself: "How placidly doth he recline his lovely little head! how pale and languishing are his looks! it is just the very child of my wishes."

The dwarfs interrupted this delectable soliloquy by leaping instantly upon her, and scratching her face with their utmost zeal. But Nerkes and Cafour, betaking themselves to the succour of their mistress, pinched the dwarfs so severely in return, that they both gave up the ghost, imploring Mahomet to inflict his sorest vengeance upon this wicked woman and all her household.

At the noise which this strange conflict occasioned in the valley Gulchenrouz awoke, and bewildered with terror, sprung impetuously upon an old fig-tree that rose against the acclivity of the rocks; from thence gained their summits, and ran for two hours without once looking back. At last, exhausted with fatigue, he fell as if dead into the arms of a good old Genius, whose fondness for the company of children had made it his sole occupation to protect them, and who, whilst performing his wonted rounds through the air, happening on the cruel Giaour at the instant of his growling in the horrible chasm, rescued the fifty little victims which the impiety of Vathek had devoted

to his maw ; these the Genius brought up in nests still higher than the clouds, and himself fixed his abode in a nest more capacious than the rest, from which he had expelled the possessors that had built it.

These inviolable asylums were defended against the Dives and the Afrits by waving streamers, on which were inscribed, in characters of gold that flashed like lightning, the names of Alla and the Prophet. It was there that Gulchenrouz, who as yet remained undeceived with respect to his pretended death, thought himself in the mansions of eternal peace ; he admitted without fear the congratulations of his little friends, who were all assembled in the nest of the venerable Genius, and vied with each other in kissing his serene forehead and beautiful eyelids. This he found to be the state congenial to his soul ; remote from the inquietudes of earth, the impertinence of harems, the brutality of eunuchs, and the lubricity of women ; in this peaceable society his days, months, and years glided on ; nor was he less happy than the rest of his companions ; for the Genius, instead of burthening his pupils with perishable riches and the vain sciences of the world, conferred upon them the boon of perpetual childhood.

Carathis, unaccustomed to the loss of her prey, vented a thousand execrations on her negresses for not seizing the child, instead of amusing themselves with pinching to death the dwarfs, from which they could gain no advantage. She returned into the valley murmuring, and finding that her son was not risen from the arms of Nouronihar, discharged her ill-humour upon both. The idea, however, of departing

next day for Istakar, and cultivating, through the good offices of the Giaour, an intimacy with Eblis himself, at length consoled her chagrin. But Fate had ordained it otherwise.

In the evening, as Carathis was conversing with Dilara, who, through her contrivance, had become of the party, and whose taste resembled her own, Bababalouk came to acquaint her "that the sky towards Samarah looked of a fiery red, and seemed to portend some alarming disaster." Immediately recurring to her astrolabes and instruments of magic, she took the altitude of the planets, and discovered by her calculations, to her great mortification, that a formidable revolt had taken place at Samarah; that Motavakel, availing himself of the disgust which was inveterate against his brother, had incited commotions amongst the populace, made himself master of the palace, and actually invested the great tower, to which Morakanabad had retired, with a handful of the few that still remained faithful to Vathek.

"What!" exclaimed she; "must I lose then my tower! my mutes! my negresses! my mummies! and, worse than all, the laboratory in which I have spent so many a night! without knowing at least if my hairbrained son will complete his adventure? No! I will not be the dupe! Immediately will I speed to support Morakanabad; by my formidable art the clouds shall sleet hailstones in the faces of the assailants, and shafts of red-hot iron on their heads; I will spring mines of serpents and torpedos from beneath them, and we shall soon see the stand they will make against such an explosion!"

Having thus spoken Carathis hastened to her son, who was tranquilly banqueting with Nouronihar in his superb carnation-coloured tent.

"Glutton that thou art!" cried she, "were it not for me, thou wouldst soon find thyself the commander only of pies. Thy faithful subjects have abjured the faith they swore to thee; Motavakel thy brother now reigns on the hill of pied horses, and had I not some slight resources in the tower, would not be easily persuaded to abdicate; but that time may not be lost, I shall only add four words: Strike tent to-night, set forward, and beware how thou loiterest again by the way; though thou hast forfeited the conditions of the parchment, I am not yet without hope; for it cannot be denied that thou hast violated to admiration the laws of hospitality, by seducing the daughter of the Emir after having partaken of his bread and his salt. Such a conduct cannot but be delightful to the Giaour; and if on thy march thou canst signalise thyself by an additional crime, all will still go well, and thou shalt enter the palace of Soliman in triumph. Adieu! Alboufaki and my negresses are waiting."

The Caliph had nothing to offer in reply; he wished his mother a prosperous journey, and ate on till he had finished his supper. At midnight the camp broke up, amidst the flourishing of trumpets and other martial instruments; but loud indeed must have been the sound of the tymbals to overpower the blubbing of the Emir and his longbeards, who, by an excessive profusion of tears, had so far exhausted the radical moisture, that their eyes shrivelled

up in their sockets, and their hairs dropped off by the roots. Nouronihar, to whom such a symphony was painful, did not grieve to get out of hearing; she accompanied the Caliph in the imperial litter, where they amused themselves with imagining the splendour which was soon to surround them. The other women, overcome with dejection, were dolefully rocked in their cages, whilst Dilara consoled herself with anticipating the joy of celebrating the rites of fire on the stately terraces of Istakar.

In four days they reached the spacious valley of Rocnabad. The season of spring was in all its vigour, and the grotesque branches of the almond trees in full blossom fantastically chequered the clear blue sky; the earth, variegated with hyacinths and jonquils, breathed forth a fragrance which diffused through the soul a divine repose; myriads of bees and scarce fewer of Santons had there taken up their abode; on the banks of the stream hives and oratories were alternately ranged, and their neatness and whiteness were set off by the deep green of the cypresses that spired up amongst them. These pious personages amused themselves with cultivating little gardens that abounded with flowers and fruits, especially musk-melons of the best flavour that Persia could boast; sometimes dispersed over the meadow, they entertained themselves with feeding peacocks whiter than snow, and turtles more blue than the sapphire; in this manner were they occupied when the harbingers of the imperial procession began to proclaim: "Inhabitants of Rocnabad! prostrate yourselves on the brink of your pure waters, and tender your thanks-

givings to Heaven that vouchsafeth to show you a ray of its glory; for lo! the Commander of the faithful draws near."

The poor Santons, filled with holy energy, having hustled to light up wax torches in their oratories and expand the Koran on their ebony desks, went forth to meet the Caliph with baskets of honeycomb, dates, and melons. But, whilst they were advancing in solemn procession and with measured steps, the horses, camels, and guards wantoned over their tulips and other flowers, and made a terrible havoc amongst them. The Santons could not help casting from one eye a look of pity on the ravages committing around them, whilst the other was fixed upon the Caliph and Heaven. Nouronihar, enraptured with the scenery of a place which brought back to her remembrance the pleasing solitudes where her infancy had passed, entreated Vathek to stop; but he, suspecting that each oratory might be deemed by the Giaour a distinct habitation, commanded his pioneers to level them all; the Santons stood motionless with horror at the barbarous mandate; and at last broke out into lamentations; but these were uttered with so ill a grace, that Vathek bade his eunuchs to kick them from his presence. He then descended from the litter with Nouronihar; they sauntered together in the meadow, and amused themselves with culling flowers, and passing a thousand pleasantries on each other. But the bees, who were staunch Mussulmans, thinking it their duty to revenge the insult on their dear masters the Santons, assembled so zealously to do it with effect, that the Caliph and Nouronihar



were glad to find their tents prepared to receive them.

Bababalouk, who in capacity of purveyor had acquitted himself with applause as to peacocks and turtles, lost no time in consigning some dozens to the spit, and as many more to be fricasseed. Whilst they were feasting, laughing, carousing, and blaspheming at pleasure on the banquet so liberally furnished, the Moullahs, the Sheiks, the Cadis and Imans of Schiraz (who seemed not to have met the Santons) arrived, leading by bridles of riband inscribed from the Koran, a train of asses, which were loaded with the choicest fruits the country could boast; having presented their offerings to the Caliph, they petitioned him to honour their city and mosques with his presence.

“Fancy not,” said Vathek, “that you can detain me; your presents I condescend to accept, but beg you will let me be quiet, for I am not over-fond of resisting temptation; retire then; yet, as it is not decent for personages so reverend to return on foot, and as you have not the appearance of expert riders, my eunuchs shall tie you on your asses, with the precaution that your backs be not turned towards me, for they understand etiquette.”

In this deputation were some high-stomached sheiks, who, taking Vathek for a fool, scrupled not to speak their opinion. These Bababalouk girded with double cords, and, having well disciplined their asses with nettles behind, they all started with a preternatural alertness, plunging, kicking, and running foul of each other in the most ludicrous manner imaginable.

Nouronihar and the Caliph mutually contended who should most enjoy so degrading a sight; they burst out in volleys of laughter to see the old men and their asses fall into the stream; the leg of one was fractured, the shoulder of another dislocated, the teeth of a third dashed out, and the rest suffered still worse.

Two days more, undisturbed by fresh embassies, having been devoted to the pleasures of Rocnabad, the expedition proceeded, leaving Shiraz on the right, and verging towards a large plain, from whence were discernible on the edge of the horizon the dark summits of the mountains of Istakar.

At this prospect the Caliph and Nouronihar were unable to repress their transport; they bounded from their litter to the ground, and broke forth into such wild exclamations, as amazed all within hearing. Interrogating each other, they shouted, "Are we not approaching the radiant palace of light? or gardens more delightful than those of Sheddad?" Infatuated mortals! they thus indulged delusive conjecture, unable to fathom the decrees of the Most High!

The good Genii, who had not totally relinquished the superintendence of Vathek, repairing to Mahomet in the seventh heaven, said: "Merciful Prophet! stretch forth thy propitious arms towards thy Vicegerent, who is ready to fall irretrievably into the snare which his enemies, the Dives, have prepared to destroy him; the Giaour is awaiting his arrival in the abominable palace of fire, where, if he once set his foot, his perdition will be inevitable."

Mahomet answered with an air of indignation:

“He hath too well deserved to be resigned to himself, but I permit you to try if one effort more will be effectual to divert him from pursuing his ruin.”

One of these beneficent Genii, assuming without delay the exterior of a shepherd, more renowned for his piety than all the Derviches and Santons of the region, took his station near a flock of white sheep on the slope of a hill, and began to pour forth from his flute such airs of pathetic melody, as subdued the very soul, and, awakening remorse, drove far from it every frivolous fancy. At these energetic sounds the sun hid himself beneath a gloomy cloud, and the waters of two little lakes, that were naturally clearer than crystal, became of a colour like blood. The whole of this superb assembly was involuntarily drawn towards the declivity of the hill; with down-cast eyes they all stood abashed, each upbraiding himself with the evil he had done; the heart of Dilara palpitated, and the chief of the eunuchs with a sigh of contrition implored pardon of the women, whom for his own satisfaction he had so often tormented.

Vathek and Nouronihar turned pale in their litter; and, regarding each other with haggard looks, reproached themselves—the one with a thousand of the blackest crimes, a thousand projects of impious ambition—the other with the desolation of her family, and the perdition of the amiable Gulchenrouz. Nouronihar persuaded herself that she heard in the fatal music the groans of her dying father, and Vathek, the sobs of the fifty children he had sacrificed to the Giaour. Amidst these complicated pangs of anguish they perceived themselves impelled towards

the shepherd, whose countenance was so commanding, that Vathek for the first time felt over-awed, whilst Nouronihar concealed her face with her hands.

The music paused, and the Genius, addressing the Caliph, said : “ Deluded Prince ! to whom Providence hath confided the care of innumerable subjects, is it thus that thou fulfillest thy mission ? Thy crimes are already completed, and art thou now hastening towards thy punishment ? Thou knowest that beyond these mountains Eblis and his accursed Dives hold their infernal empire ; and, seduced by a malignant phantom, thou art proceeding to surrender thyself to them ! This moment is the last of grace allowed thee ; abandon thy atrocious purpose ; return ; give back Nouronihar to her father, who still retains a few sparks of life ; destroy thy tower with all its abominations ; drive Carathis from thy councils ; be just to thy subjects ; respect the ministers of the Prophet ; compensate for thy impieties by an exemplary life ; and, instead of squandering thy days in voluptuous indulgence, lament thy crimes on the sepulchres of thy ancestors. Thou beholdest the clouds that obscure the sun ; at the instant he recovers his splendour, if thy heart be not changed, the time of mercy assigned thee will be past for ever.”

Vathek, depressed with fear, was on the point of prostrating himself at the feet of the shepherd, whom he perceived to be of a nature superior to man ; but, his pride prevailing, he audaciously lifted his head, and, glancing at him one of his terrible looks, said : “ Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions ; thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived.

If what I have done be so criminal as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace; I have traversed a sea of blood to acquire a power which will make thy equals tremble; deem not that I shall retire when in view of the port, or that I will relinquish her who is dearer to me than either my life or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! let him illumine my career! it matters not where it may end." On uttering these words, which made even the Genius shudder, Vathek threw himself into the arms of Nouronihar, and commanded that his horses should be forced back to the road.

There was no difficulty in obeying these orders, for the attraction had ceased; the sun shone forth in all his glory, and the shepherd vanished with a lamentable scream.

The fatal impression of the music of the Genius remained notwithstanding in the heart of Vathek's attendants; they viewed each other with looks of consternation; at the approach of night almost all of them escaped, and of this numerous assemblage there only remained the chief of the eunuchs, some idolatrous slaves, Dilara and a few other women, who, like herself, were votaries of the religion of the Magi.

The Caliph, fired with the ambition of prescribing laws to the Intelligences of Darkness, was but little embarrassed at this dereliction; the impetuosity of his blood prevented him from sleeping, nor did he encamp any more as before. Nouronihar, whose impatience if possible exceeded his own, importuned him to hasten his march, and lavished on him a thousand caresses to beguile all reflection; she fancied her

self already more potent than Balkis, and pictured to her imagination the Genii falling prostrate at the foot of her throne. In this manner they advanced by moonlight, till they came within view of the two towering rocks that form a kind of portal to the valley, at whose extremity rose the vast ruins of Istakar. Aloft on the mountain glimmered the fronts of various royal mausoleums, the horror of which was deepened by the shadows of night. They passed through two villages almost deserted, the only inhabitants remaining being a few feeble old men, who, at the sight of horses and litters, fell upon their knees and cried out :

“O Heaven! is it then by these phantoms that we have been for six months tormented? Alas! it was from the terror of these spectres and the noise beneath the mountains, that our people have fled, and left us at the mercy of malificent spirits!”

The Caliph, to whom these complaints were but unpromising auguries, drove over the bodies of these wretched old men, and at length arrived at the foot of the terrace of black marble; there he descended from his litter, handing down Nouronihar; both with beating hearts stared wildly around them, and expected with an apprehensive shudder the approach of the Giaour; but nothing as yet announced his appearance.

A deathlike stillness reigned over the mountain and through the air; the moon dilated on a vast platform the shades of the lofty columns, which reached from the terrace almost to the clouds; the gloomy watch-towers, whose numbers could not be counted, were veiled by no roof, and their capitals,



of an architecture unknown in the records of the earth, served as an asylum for the birds of darkness, which, alarmed at the approach of such visitants, fled away croaking.

The chief of the eunuchs, trembling with fear, besought Vathek that a fire might be kindled.

“No!” replied he, “there is no time left to think of such trifles; abide where thou art, and expect my commands.”

Having thus spoken, he presented his hand to Nouronihar, and, ascending the steps of a vast staircase, reached the terrace, which was flagged with squares of marble, and resembled a smooth expanse of water, upon whose surface not a leaf ever dared to vegetate; on the right rose the watch-towers, ranged before the ruins of an immense palace, whose walls were embossed with various figures; in front stood forth the colossal forms of four creatures, composed of the leopard and the griffin; and, though but of stone, inspired emotions of terror; near these were distinguished by the splendour of the moon, which streamed full on the place, characters like those on the sabres of the Giaour, that possessed the same virtue of changing every moment; these, after vacillating for some time, at last fixed in Arabic letters, and prescribed to the Caliph the following words:

“Vathek! thou hast violated the conditions of my parchment, and deservest to be sent back; but, in favour to thy companion, and as the meed for what thou hast done to obtain it, EBLIS permitteth that the portal of his palace shall be opened, and the

subterranean fire will receive thee into the number of its adorers."

He scarcely had read these words before the mountain against which the terrace was reared trembled, and the watch-towers were ready to topple headlong upon them; the rock yawned, and disclosed within it a staircase of polished marble that seemed to approach the abyss; upon each stair were planted two large torches, like those Nouronihar had seen in her vision, the camphorated vapour ascending from which gathered into a cloud under the hollow of the vault.

This appearance, instead of terrifying, gave new courage to the daughter of Fakreddin. Scarcely deigning to bid adieu to the moon and the firmament, she abandoned without hesitation the pure atmosphere to plunge into these infernal exhalations. The gait of those impious personages was haughty and determined; as they descended by the effulgence of the torches they gazed on each other with mutual admiration, and both appeared so resplendent, that they already esteemed themselves spiritual Intelligences; the only circumstance that perplexed them was their not arriving at the bottom of the stairs; on hastening their descent with an ardent impetuosity, they felt their steps accelerated to such a degree, that they seemed not walking, but falling from a precipice. Their progress, however, was at length impeded by a vast portal of ebony, which the Caliph without difficulty recognised; here the Giaour awaited them with the key in his hand.

"Ye are welcome," said he to them with a ghastly



THE GIOUR ADMITS VATHEK AND NOURONIHAR INTO EBLIS.



smile, "in spite of Mahomet and all his dependants. I will now admit you into that palace where you have so highly merited a place."

Whilst he was uttering these words he touched the enamelled lock with his key, and the doors at once expanded, with a noise still louder than the thunder of mountains, and as suddenly recoiled the moment they had entered.

The Caliph and Nouronihar beheld each other with amazement, at finding themselves in a place which, though roofed with a vaulted ceiling, was so spacious and lofty that at first they took it for an immeasurable plain. But their eyes at length growing familiar to the grandeur of the objects at hand, they extended their view to those at a distance, and discovered rows of columns and arcades, which gradually diminished till they terminated in a point, radiant as the sun when he darts his last beams athwart the ocean; the pavement, strewed over with gold dust and saffron, exhaled so subtle an odour as almost overpowered them; they however went on, and observed an infinity of censers, in which ambergris and the wood of aloes were continually burning; between the several columns were placed tables, each spread with a profusion of viands, and wines of every species sparkling in vases of crystal. A throng of Genii and other fantastic spirits of each sex danced lasciviously in troops, at the sound of music which issued from beneath.

In the midst of this immense hall a vast multitude was incessantly passing, who severally kept their right hands on their hearts, without once regarding any-

thing around them; they had all the livid paleness of death; their eyes, deep sunk in their sockets, resembled those phosphoric meteors that glimmer by night in places of interment. Some stalked slowly on, absorbed in profound reverie; some, shrieking with agony, ran furiously about, like tigers wounded with poisoned arrows; whilst others, grinding their teeth in rage, foamed along, more frantic than the wildest maniac. They all avoided each other, and, though surrounded by a multitude that no one could number, each wandered at random, unheedful of the rest, as if alone on a desert which no foot had trodden.

Vathek and Nouronihar, frozen with terror at a sight so baleful, demanded of the Giaour what these appearances might mean, and why these ambulating spectres never withdrew their hands from their hearts.

“Perplex not yourselves,” replied he bluntly, “with so much at once, you will soon be acquainted with all; let us haste and present you to Eblis.”

They continued their way through the multitude; but, notwithstanding their confidence at first, they were not sufficiently composed to examine with attention the various perspectives of halls and of galleries that opened on the right hand and left, which were all illuminated by torches and braziers, whose flames rose in pyramids to the centre of the vault. At length they came to a place where long curtains, brocaded with crimson and gold, fell from all parts in striking confusion; here the choirs and dances were heard no longer, the light which glimmered came from afar.



After some time Vathek and Nouronihar perceived a gleam brightening through the drapery, and entered a vast tabernacle carpeted with the skins of leopards; an infinity of elders with streaming beards, and Afrits in complete armour, had prostrated themselves before the ascent of a lofty eminence, on the top of which, upon a globe of fire, sat the formidable Eblis. His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours; in his large eyes appeared both pride and despair; his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light; in his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre that causes the monster Ouranabad, the Afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble; at his presence the heart of the Caliph sunk within him, and for the first time, he fell prostrate on his face. Nouronihar, however, though greatly dismayed, could not help admiring the person of Eblis; for she expected to have seen some stupendous Giant. Eblis, with a voice more mild than might be imagined, but such as transfused through the soul the deepest melancholy, said :

“Creatures of clay, I receive you into mine empire; ye are numbered amongst my adorers; enjoy whatever this palace affords; the treasures of the Preadamite Sultans, their bickering sabres, and those talismans that compel the Dives to open the subterranean expanses of the mountain of Kaf, which communicate with these; there, insatiable as your curiosity may be, shall you find sufficient to gratify it; you shall possess the exclusive privilege of en-

tering the fortress of Aherman, and the halls of Argenk, where are pourtrayed all creatures endowed with intelligence, and the various animals that inhabited the earth prior to the creation of that contemptible being, whom ye denominate the Father of Mankind."

Vathek and Nouronihar, feeling themselves revived and encouraged by this harangue, eagerly said to the Giaour:

"Bring us instantly to the place which contains these precious talismans."

"Come!" answered this wicked Dive, with his malignant grin, "Come! and possess all that my Sovereign hath promised, and more."

He then conducted them into a long aisle adjoining the tabernacle, preceding them with hasty steps, and followed by his disciples with the utmost alacrity. They reached, at length, a hall of great extent, and covered with a lofty dome, around which appeared fifty portals of bronze, secured with as many fastenings of iron; a funereal gloom prevailed over the whole scene; here, upon two beds of incorruptible cedar, lay recumbent the fleshless forms of the Pre-adamite Kings, who had been monarchs of the whole earth; they still possessed enough of life to be conscious of their deplorable condition; their eyes retained a melancholy motion; they regarded each other with looks of the deepest dejection; each holding his right hand motionless on his heart; at their feet were inscribed the events of their several reigns, their power, their pride, and their crimes; Soliman Raad, Soliman Daki, and Soliman Di Gian, Ben

Gian, who, after having chained up the Dives in the dark caverns of Kaf, became so presumptuous as to doubt of the Supreme power; all these maintained great state, though not to be compared with the eminence of Soliman Ben Daoud.

This king, so renowned for his wisdom, was on the loftiest elevation, and placed immediately under the dome; he appeared to possess more animation than the rest; though from time to time he laboured with profound sighs, and, like his companions, kept his right hand on his heart; yet his countenance was more composed, and he seemed to be listening to the sullen roar of a vast cataract, visible in part through the grated portals; this was the only sound that intruded on the silence of these doleful mansions. A range of brazen vases surrounded the elevation.

"Remove the covers from these cabalistic depositaries," said the Giaour to Vathek, "and avail thyself of the talismans, which will break asunder all these gates of bronze; and not only render thee master of the treasures contained within them, but also of the spirits by which they are guarded.

The Caliph, whom this ominous preliminary had entirely disconcerted, approached the vases with faltering footsteps, and was ready to sink with terror when he heard the groans of Soliman. As he proceeded, a voice from the livid lips of the Prophet articulated these words:

"In my lifetime I filled a magnificent throne, having on my right hand twelve thousand seats of gold, where the patriarchs and the prophets heard my doctrines; on my left the sages and doctors,

upon as many thrones of silver, were present at all my decisions. Whilst I thus administered justice to innumerable multitudes, the birds of the air librating over me, served as a canopy from the rays of the sun; my people flourished, and my palace rose to the clouds; I erected a temple to the Most High, which was the wonder of the universe; but I basely suffered myself to be seduced by the love of women, and a curiosity that could not be restrained by sublunary things; I listened to the counsels of Ahernan and the daughter of Pharaoh, and adored fire and the hosts of heaven; I forsook the holy city, and commanded the Genii to rear the stupendous palace of Istakar, and the terrace of the watch-towers, each of which was consecrated to a star; there for a while I enjoyed myself in the zenith of glory and pleasure; not only men, but supernatural existences, were subject also to my will. I began to think, as these unhappy monarchs around had already thought, that the vengeance of Heaven was asleep; when at once the thunder burst my structures asunder, and precipitated me hither; where, however, I do not remain, like the other inhabitants, totally destitute of hope, for an angel of light hath revealed that, in consideration of the piety of my early youth, my woes shall come to an end when this cataract shall for ever cease to flow; till then I am in torments, ineffable torments! an unrelenting fire preys on my heart."

Having uttered this exclamation Soliman raised his hands towards Heaven, in token of supplication, and the Caliph discerned through his bosom, which was transparent as crystal, his heart enveloped in

flames. At a sight so full of horror Nouronihar fell back, like one petrified, into the arms of Vathek, who cried out with a convulsive sob :

“O Giaour ! whither hast thou brought us ? Allow us to depart, and I will relinquish all thou hast promised. O Mahomet ! remains there no more mercy ?”

“None ! none !” replied the malicious Dive. “Know, miserable prince ! thou art now in the abode of vengeance and despair ; thy heart also will be kindled, like those of the other votaries of Eblis. A few days are allotted thee previous to this fatal period ; employ them as thou wilt ; recline on these heaps of gold ; command the Infernal Potentates ; range at thy pleasure through these immense subterranean domains ; no barrier shall be shut against thee ; as for me, I have fulfilled my mission ; I now leave thee to thyself.” At these words he vanished.

The Caliph and Nouronihar remained in the most abject affliction ; their tears unable to flow, scarcely could they support themselves. At length, taking each other despondingly by the hand, they went faltering from this fatal hall, indifferent which way they turned their steps ; every portal opened at their approach ; the Dives fell prostrate before them ; every reservoir of riches was disclosed to their view ; but they no longer felt the incentives of curiosity, pride, or avarice. With like apathy they heard the chorus of Genii, and saw the stately banquets prepared to regale them ; they went wandering on from chamber to chamber, hall to hall, and gallery to gallery, all without bounds or limit, all distinguishable by the same lowering gloom, all adorned with the same awful

grandeur, all traversed by persons in search of repose and consolation, but who sought them in vain; for every one carried within him a heart tormented in flames: shunned by these various sufferers, who seemed by their looks to be upbraiding the partners of their guilt, they withdrew from them to wait in direful suspense the moment which should render them to each other the like objects of terror.

“What!” exclaimed Nouronihar; “will the time come when I shall snatch my hand from thine?”

“Ah!” said Vathek; “and shall my eyes ever cease to drink from thine long draughts of enjoyment! Shall the moments of our reciprocal ecstasies be reflected on with horror! It was not thou that broughtest me hither; the principles by which Carathis perverted my youth have been the sole cause of my perdition!” Having given vent to these painful expressions, he called to an Afrit, who was stirring up one of the braziers, and bade him fetch the Princess Carathis from the palace of Samarah.

After issuing these orders, the Caliph and Nouronihar continued walking amidst the silent crowd, till they heard voices at the end of the gallery; presuming them to proceed from some unhappy beings, who, like themselves, were awaiting their final doom, they followed the sound, and found it to come from a small square chamber, where they discovered sitting on sofas five young men of goodly figure, and a lovely female, who were all holding a melancholy conversation by the glimmering of a lonely lamp; each had a gloomy and forlorn air, and two of them were embracing each other with great tenderness. On seeing



the Caliph and the daughter of Fakreddin enter, they arose, saluted, and gave them place; then he who appeared the most considerable of the group addressed himself thus to Vathek.

“Strangers! who doubtless are in the same state of suspense with ourselves, as you do not yet bear your hand on your heart, if you are come hither to pass the interval allotted previous to the infliction of our common punishment, condescend to relate the adventures that have brought you to this fatal place, and we in return will acquaint you with ours, which deserve but too well to be heard; we will trace back our crimes to their source, though we are not permitted to repent; this is the only employment suited to wretches like us!”

The Caliph and Nouronihar assented to the proposal, and Vathek began, not without tears and lamentations, a sincere recital of every circumstance that had passed. When the afflicting narrative was closed, the young man entered on his own.\* Each person proceeded in order, and when the fourth prince had reached the midst of his adventures, a sudden noise interrupted him, which caused the vault to tremble and to open.

Immediately a cloud descended, which, gradually dissipating, discovered Carathis on the back of an Afrit, who grievously complained of his burden. She,

\* See note to the Author's French preface; Beckford has here added the titles of three stories related in the Hall of Eblis. This is all that he has done, the three titles given being inserted in the third French edition, but not in the English preface, between the paragraphs separated by an asterisk. Beckford does not appear ever to have proceeded further with these tales than the titles.

instantly springing to the ground, advanced towards her son and said :

“What dost thou here in this little square chamber ? As the Dives are become subject to thy beck, I expected to have found thee on the throne of the Pre-adamite Kings.”

“Execrable woman !” answered the Caliph ; “cursed be the day thou gavest me birth ! go, follow this Afrit, let him conduct thee to the hall of the Prophet Soliman ; there thou wilt learn to what these palaces are destined, and how much I ought to abhor the impious knowledge thou hast taught me.”

“The height of power, to which thou art arrived, has certainly turned thy brain,” answered Carathis ; “but I ask no more than permission to show my respect for the Prophet. It is, however, proper thou shouldest know, that (as the Afrit has informed me neither of us shall return to Samarah) I requested his permission to arrange my affairs, and he politely consented ; availing myself therefore of the few moments allowed me, I set fire to the tower, and consumed in it the mutes, negresses, and serpents which have rendered me so much good service ; nor should I have been less kind to Morakanabad, had he not prevented me, by deserting at last to thy brother. As for Bababalouk, who had the folly to return to Samarah, and all the good brotherhood to provide husbands for thy wives, I undoubtedly would have put them to the torture, could I but have allowed them the time ; being, however, in a hurry, I only hung him after having caught him in a snare with thy wives, whilst them I buried alive by the help of

my negresses, who thus spent their last moments greatly to their satisfaction. With respect to Dilara, who ever stood high in my favour, she hath evinced the greatness of her mind by fixing herself near in the service of one of the Magi, and I think will soon be our own."

Vathek, too much cast down to express the indignation excited by such a discourse, ordered the Afrit to remove Carathis from his presence, and continued immersed in thought, which his companion durst not disturb.

Carathis, however, eagerly entered the dome of Soliman, and, without regarding in the least the groans of the Prophet, undauntedly removed the covers of the vases, and violently seized on the talismans; then, with a voice more loud than had hitherto been heard within these mansions, she compelled the Dives to disclose to her the most secret treasures, the most profound stores, which the Afrit himself had not seen; she passed by rapid descents known only to Eblis and his most favourite potentates, and thus penetrated the very entrails of the earth, where breathes the Sansar, or icy wind of death; nothing appalled her dauntless soul; she perceived, however, in all the inmates who bore their hands on their heart a little singularity, not much to her taste. As she was emerging from one of the abysses, Eblis stood forth to her view, but, notwithstanding he displayed the full effulgence of his infernal majesty, she preserved her countenance unaltered, and even paid her compliments with considerable firmness.

This superb Monarch thus answered: "Princess,

whose knowledge and whose crimes have merited a conspicuous rank in my empire, thou dost well to employ the leisure that remains ; for the flames and torments, which are ready to seize on thy heart, will not fail to provide thee with full employment." He said this, and was lost in the curtains of his tabernacle.

Carathis paused for a moment with surprise ; but, resolved to follow the advice of Eblis, she assembled all the choirs of Genii, and all the Dives, to pay her homage ; thus marched she in triumph through a vapour of perfumes, amidst the acclamations of all the malignant spirits, with most of whom she had formed a previous acquaintance ; she even attempted to dethrone one of the Solimans for the purpose of usurping his place, when a voice, proceeding from the abyss of Death, proclaimed, "All is accomplished !" Instantaneously the haughty forehead of the intrepid Princess was corrugated with agony ; she uttered a tremendous yell, and fixed, no more to be withdrawn, her right hand upon her heart, which was become a receptacle of eternal fire.

In this delirium, forgetting all ambitious projects, and her thirst for that knowledge which should ever be hidden from mortals, she overturned the offerings of the Genii, and, having execrated the hour she was begotten and the womb that had borne her, glanced off in a whirl that rendered her invisible, and continued to revolve without intermission.

At almost the same instant the same voice announced to the Caliph, Nouronihar, the five princes, and the princess, the awful and irrevocable decree.

Their hearts immediately took fire, and they at once lost the most precious of the gifts of heaven—Hope. These unhappy beings recoiled with looks of the most furious distraction; Vathek beheld in the eyes of Nouronihar nothing but rage and vengeance, nor could she discern aught in his but aversion and despair. The two princes who were friends, and till that moment had preserved their attachment, shrunk back gnashing their teeth with mutual and unchangeable hatred. Kalilah and his sister made reciprocal gestures of imprecation, whilst the two other princes testified their horror for each other by the most ghastly convulsions, and screams that could not be smothered. All severally plunged themselves into the accursed multitude, there to wander in an eternity of unabating anguish.

Such was, and such should be, the punishment of unrestrained passions and atrocious actions! Such is, and such should be, the chastisement of blind ambition, that would transgress those bounds which the Creator hath prescribed to human knowledge; and, by aiming at discoveries reserved for pure Intelligence, acquire that infatuated pride, which perceives not the condition appointed to man is to be ignorant and humble.

Thus the Caliph Vathek, who, for the sake of empty pomp and forbidden power, had sullied himself with a thousand crimes, became a prey to grief without end, and remorse without mitigation; whilst the humble and despised Gulchenrouz passed whole ages in undisturbed tranquillity and the pure happiness of childhood.





## NOTES.

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Page 17. *Caliph*. This title amongst the Mahometans comprehends the concrete character of prophet, priest, and king, and is used to signify the Vicar of God on earth. Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire, p. 9; Herbelot, p. 985.

*One of his eyes became so terrible*. The author of Nighiaristan hath preserved a fact that supports this account; and there is no history of Vathek in which his terrible eye is not mentioned.

*Omar Ben Abdalaziz*. This caliph was eminent above all others for temperance and self-denial, insomuch that he is believed to have been raised to Mahomet's bosom, as a reward for his abstinence in an age of corruption. Herbelot, p. 690.

Page 18. *Samarah*. A city of the Babylonian Irak, supposed to have stood on the site where Nimrod erected his tower. Khondemir relates, in his life of Motassem, that this prince, to terminate the disputes which were perpetually happening between the inhabitants of Bagdat and his Turkish slaves, withdrew from thence, and, having fixed on a situation in the plain of Catoul, there founded Samarah; he is said to have had in the stables of this city a hundred and thirty thousand pied horses, each of which carried by his order a sack of earth to a place he had chosen; by this accumulation an elevation was formed that commanded a view of all Samarah, and served for the foundation of his magnificent palace. Herbelot, p. 752, 808, 985; Anecdotes Arabes, p. 413.

*In the most delightful succession*. The great men of the East have been always fond of music. Though forbidden by the Mahometan religion, it commonly makes a part of every entertainment; female slaves are generally kept to amuse them and the ladies of their harems. The Persian Khanyagere seems nearly to have resembled our old English minstrel, as he

usually accompanied his barbut, or 'lute, with heroic songs; their musicians appear to have known the art of moving the passions, and to have generally directed their music to the heart. Al Farabi, a philosopher, who died about the middle of the tenth century, on his return from the pilgrimage of Mecca, introduced himself, though a stranger, at the court of Seifed-doula, sultan of Syria; musicians were accidentally performing, and he joined them; the prince admired him, and wished to hear something of his own; he drew a composition from his pocket, and distributing the parts amongst the band, the first movement threw the prince and his courtiers into violent laughter, the next melted all into tears, and the last lulled even the performers asleep. Richardson's Dissertation on the Languages, &c., of Eastern Nations, p. 211.

*Mani.* This artist, whom Inatulla of Delhi styles the far-famed, lived in the reign of Schabur, or Sapor, the son of Ardichir Babegan, was founder of the sect of Manicheans, and by profession a painter and sculptor; his pretensions, supported by an uncommon skill in mechanical contrivances, induced the ignorant to believe that his powers were more than human. After having secluded himself from his followers, under the pretence of passing a year in Heaven, he produced a wonderful volume, which he affirmed to have brought from thence, containing images and figures of a marvellous nature. Herbelot, p. 548. It appears from the Arabian Nights that Haroun Al Raschid, Vathek's grandfather, had adorned his palace and furnished his magnificent pavilion with the most capital performances of the Persian artists.

Page 19. *Houris.* The Virgins of Paradise, called from their large black eyes,<sup>1</sup> *Hur al oyun.* An intercourse with these,

<sup>1</sup> Might not Akenside's expression :

In the dark heaven of Mira's eye—

have been suggested by the eyes of the virgins of Paradise?

The enthusiasm of the acute Winckelmann for the statuary of the ancients was apt to mislead both his judgment and taste. What but such a bias could induce him to maintain—after asserting that Homer meant by the word *Βωπις* to characterise the beauty of Juno's eyes, and citing with approbation *μελανοφθαλμος—καλη το προσωπον* as the gloss of the Scholiast upon it—that the epithet the poet had selected was designed by him to express, not what it naturally imports, but a sense independent of it, and

according to the institution of Mahomet, is to constitute the principal felicity of the faithful ; not formed of clay like mortal women, they are deemed in the highest degree beautiful, and exempt from every inconvenience incident to the sex. Al Koran ; passim.

Page 20. *It was not with the orthodox that he usually held.* Vathek persecuted with extreme rigour all who defended the eternity of the Koran, which the Sonnites, or orthodox, maintained to be uncreated, and the Motazalites and Schiites as strenuously denied. Herbelot, p. 85, &c.

*Mahomet in the seventh Heaven.* In this heaven the paradise of Mahomet is supposed to be placed contiguous to the throne of Alla. Hagi Khalfah relates that Ben Iatmaiah, a celebrated Doctor of Damascus, had the temerity to assert that, when the Most High erected his throne, he reserved a vacant place for Mahomet upon it.

*Genii.* Genn or Ginn in the Arabic signifies a genius or demon, a being of a higher order, and formed of more subtle matter than man. According to Oriental mythology, the genii governed the world long before the creation of Adam ; the Mahometans regarded them as an intermediate race between angels and men, and capable of salvation, whence Mahomet pretended a commission to convert them. Consonant to this, we read that when the servant of God stood up to invoke him,

which it could only be supposed to imply, from being placed in an absurd connexion? The eye of the animal to which the term belongs is no doubt large, if referred to the human countenance, but not properly so in its own situation. Had Homer applied *Βωπις* to the statue of Juno, *Βωπις* (as the Abbé contends) must have been interpreted large eyed, because in this relation no idea except that of magnitude (unless we add prominence) could possibly be extorted from it ; but it must be allowed, on the same principle, that an epithet taken from the eye of the ass, or any other creature's of equal size, whatever were its colour, would have become the statue of the goddess as well, and signified precisely the same. On such commentators a poet might justly exclaim :

—Pol, me occidistis, amici,  
Non servastis !

In their descriptions of female beauty, the poets of the east frequently use the same image with Homer, and exactly in his sense ; thus in particular, Lebeid : “A company of maidens were seated in their vehicles, with black eyes and graceful motions, like the wild heifers of Tudah.”

it wanted little but that the Genii had pressed on him in crowds to hear him rehearse the Koran. Herbelot, p. 375 ; Al Koran, ch. 72.

*Assist him to complete the tower.* The genii, who were styled by the Persians peries and dives, were famous for their architectural skill ; the pyramids of Egypt have been ascribed to them, and we are told of a strange fortress which they constructed in the remote mountains of Spain, whose frontal presented the following inscription :

It is no light task to disclose the portal of this asylum :

The bolt, rash passenger, is not of iron, but the tooth of a furious dragon :

Know thou that no one can break this charm

Till Destiny shall have consigned the key to his advent'rous hand.

The Koran relates that the genii were employed by Solomon in the erection of his magnificent temple. Bailly sur l'Atlantide, p. 146 ; Herbelot, p. 8 ; Al Koran, ch. 34.

Page 22. *The stranger displayed such rarities as he had never before seen.* In the Tales of Inatulla we meet with a traveller who like this was furnished with trinkets and curiosities of an extraordinary kind ; that such were much sought after in the days of Vathek may be concluded from the encouragement which Haroun Al Raschid gave to the mechanic arts, and the present he sent by his ambassadors to Charlemagne ; this consisted of a clock, which when put into motion by means of a clepsydrum, not only pointed out the hours in their round, but also by dropping small balls on a bell struck them, and at the same instant threw open as many little doors to let out an equal number of horsemen ; besides these the clock displayed various other contrivances. Ann. Reg. Franc. Pip. Caroli, &c., ad ann. 807 ; Weidler, p. 205.

Page 22. *Characters on the sabres.* Such inscriptions often occur in Eastern romances ; we find in the Arabian Nights a cornelian, on which unknown characters were engraven, and also a sabre like those here described. In the French King's library is a curious treatise, intitled *Sefat Alaclam*, containing a variety of alphabets arranged under different heads, such as the prophetic, the mystical, the philosophic, the magical, the talismanic, &c., which seems to have escaped the research of

the indefatigable Mr. Astle. *Arabian Nights*, vol. ii. p. 246, vol. i. p. 143; Herbelot, p. 797.

Page 25. *Endeavoured by her consolation to heal and compose him.* The same sanative quality is ascribed to soothing conversation, both by Æschylus and Milton :

Οργης νοσουσης εισιν ιατροι λογοι.

*Prometh. v. 378.*

—Apt words have power to suage

The tumours of a troubled mind ;

And are as balm to festered wounds.

*Samson Agon. v. 184.*

Page 27. *Beards burnt off.* The loss of the beard from the earliest ages was accounted highly disgraceful ; an instance occurs in the *Tales of Inatulla* of one being singed off, as a mulct on the owner for having failed to explain a question propounded, and in the *Arabian Nights* a proclamation may be seen similar to this of *Vathek*. Vol. i. p. 268, vol. ii. p. 228.

Page 28. *Robes of honour and sequins of gold.* Such rewards were common in the East. See particularly *Arabian Nights*, vol. ii. p. 72, 125, vol. iii. p. 64.

*The old man put on his green spectacles.* This is an apparent anachronism, but such frequently occur in reading the *Arabian writers* ; it should be remembered, the difficulty of ascertaining facts and fixing the dates of inventions must be considerable in a vast extent of country, where books are comparatively few, and the art of printing unpractised ; though the origin of spectacles can be traced back with certainty no higher than the thirteenth century, yet the observation of Seneca, that letters appeared of an increased magnitude when viewed through the medium of convex glass, might have been noted also by others, and a sort of spectacles contrived in consequence of it ; but, however, this might have been, the art of staining glass is sufficiently ancient to have suggested in the days of *Vathek* the use of green as a protection to the eye from a glare of light.

Page 30. *The stars which he went to consult.* The phrase of the original corresponds with the Greek expression, Αστρο

Βιαζεσθαι, which in another view will illustrate St. Matthew xi. 12.

Page 32. *To drink at will of the Four Fountains, which were reputed in the highest degree salubrious, and sacred to himself,* or literally, to be of gold and sacred to himself. Agathocles (cited by Athenæus, l. xi. p. 515) relates that "there were certain fountains in these regions to the number of seventy, whose waters were denominated golden, and of which it was death for any one to drink save the king and his eldest son." In this number, as appears from our author's epithet, the Four Fountains were formerly reckoned, whose waters, as Vathek had no son, were sacred to his own use. The citation from Agathocles may likewise explain the wish of King David "for water from the well of Bethlehem," unless we suppose it to have arisen from a predilection like that of the Parthian monarchs for the water of Choaspes, which was carried with them wherever they went, and from that circumstance styled by Tibullus *regia lymp̄ha*, and by Milton

The drink of none but kings.

*Bowls of rock crystal.* In the Arabian Nights Schemselnihar and Ebn Thaker were served by three of their attendants, each bringing them a goblet of rock crystal filled with curious wine.

*Accursed Giaour.* Dives of this kind are frequently mentioned by Eastern writers ; consult their tales in general, and especially those of the Fisherman, Aladdin, and the Princess of China.

Page 32. "*Drink this draught,*" said the stranger, *as he presented a phial.* A phial of a similar potion is ordered to be instantaneously drank off in one of the Tales of Inatulla. "These brewed enchantments" have been used in the East from the days of Homer. Milton in his *Comus* describes one of them, which greatly resembles the Indian's :

And first behold this cordial julep here,  
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,  
With spirits of balm, and fragrant syrups mix'd.  
Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone  
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,  
Is of such pow'r to stir up joy as this ;  
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.



Page 33. *The Poets applied them as a chorus to all the songs they composed.* Sir John Chardin, describing a public entertainment and rejoicing, observes that the most ingenious poets in Persia (as is related of Homer) sung their own works, which for the most part are in praise of the king, whom they fail not to extol, let him be never so worthy of blame and oblivion; the songs of this day were adapted to the occasion of the festival, which was the restoration of the prime minister to his office—he adds, “I saw one that abounded in fine and witty turns, the burthen of which was this :

Him set aside, all men but equals are ;  
E'en Sol surveyed the spacious realms of air,  
To see if he could find another star,  
A star, that like the polar star could reign,  
And long he sought it, but he sought in vain.<sup>1</sup>

The ingenuity of the poet seems to consist in an allusion to the prime minister's title, Ivon Medave, or the Pole of Persia.

Page 34. *Bababalouk, the chief of his eunuchs.* As it was the employment of the black eunuchs to wait upon and guard the sultanas, so the general superintendence of the harem was particularly committed to their chief. Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire, pp. 155, 6.

Page 35. *The Divan.* This was both the supreme council and court of justice, at which the caliphs of the race of the Abasides assisted in person to redress the injuries of every appellant. Herbelot, p. 298.

*The officers arranged themselves in a semicircle.* Such was the etiquette constantly observed on entering the Divan. Arab. Nights, vol. iv. p. 36; Herbelot, p. 912.

*The prime vizier.* Vazir, vezir, or as we express it, vizier, literally signifies a porter, and by metaphor the minister who bears the principal burthen of the state.

Page 36. *The Indian being short and plump, collected him-*

<sup>1</sup> See Lloyd's Introduction to a Collection of Voyages and Travels never before published in English, p. 21.

*self into a ball, &c.* Happy as Horace has been in his description of the wise man, the figurative expressions which finish the character are literally applicable to our author's Indian :

in seipso totus, teres atque rotundus ;  
 Externi ne quid valeat per læve morari :  
 In quem manca ruit semper fortuna.

Page 38. *The Meuzins and their minarets.* Valid, the son of Abdalmalek, was the first who erected a minaret or turret, and this he placed on the grand Mosque at Damascus, for the meuzin or crier to announce from it the hour of prayer. Herbelot, p. 576.

Page 41. *The subterranean palace of fire.* Of this palace, which is frequently mentioned in Eastern romance, a full description will be found in the sequel.

Page 42. *I require the blood of fifty of the most beautiful sons of the viziers.* Amongst the infatuated votaries of the powers of darkness, the most acceptable offering was the blood of their children; if the parents were not at hand to make an immediate offer, the magistrates did not fail to select those who were most fair and promising, that the demon might not be defrauded of his dues. On one occasion two hundred of the prime nobility were sacrificed together. Byrant's Observations, p. 279, &c.

Page 45. *Give them me, cried the Indian.* In the story of Codadad and his brother, we read of a black like this who fed upon human blood. Arab. Nights, vol. iii. p. 199.

Page 46. *With the grin of an ogre.* Thus in the History of the Punished Vizier : "The Prince heard enough to convince him of his danger, and then perceived that the lady who called herself the daughter of an Indian king was an ogress, wife to one of those savage demons called an ogre, who stay in remote places, and make use of a thousand wiles to surprise and devour passengers." Arab. Nights, vol. i. p. 56.

*Bracelet.* The bracelet, in the East, was an emblem of royalty. Herbelot, p. 541.—For want of a more proper term to denominate the ornament *serkhooj*, the word *aigret* is here used.

Page 48. *Mutes*. It has been usual in eastern courts, from time immemorial, to retain a number of mutes ; these are not only employed to amuse the monarch, but also to instruct his pages in an art to us little known, of communicating everything by signs, lest the sounds of their voices should disturb the sovereign. Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire, p. 164.—The mutes are also the secret instruments of his private vengeance.

Page 50. *Prayer announced at break of day*. The stated seasons of public prayer in the twenty-four hours were five : daybreak, noon, mid-time between noon and sunset, immediately as the sun leaves the horizon, and an hour and a half after it is down.

*Mummies*. *Mounia* (from *Moun*, wax and tallow) signifies the flesh of the human body preserved in the sand, after having been embalmed and wrapped in cerements ; they are frequently found in the sepulchres of Egypt, but most of the oriental mummies are, brought from a cavern near Abin, in Persia. Herbelot, p. 647.

Page 51. *Rhinoceros' horns*. Of their extraordinary qualities and application a curious account may be seen in the Bibliothèque Orientale, and the Supplement to it.

*Skulls and Skeletons*. Both were usually added to the ingredients already mentioned. These magic rites sufficiently resemble the witch scenes of Middleton, Shakespeare, &c., to show their oriental origin ; nor is it to be wondered if, amongst the many systems adopted from the East, this should have been in the number. It may be seen from the Arabian Tales that magic was an art publicly taught ; and Father Angelo relates of a rich enchanter whom he knew at Bassora, that his pupils were so numerous as to occupy an entire quarter of the city.

Page 56. *Flagons of wine, and vases of sherbet floating on snow*. Sir John Chardin speaks of a wine much admired in the East, and particularly in Persia, called *roubnar*, which is made from the juice of the pomegranate, and sent abroad in large quantities. The oriental sherbets, styled by St. Jerome *sorbitiunculæ delicatæ*, consisted of various syrups (such as

lemon, liquorice, capillaire, &c.) mixed with water ; to these Hasselquist adds several others, and observes that the sweet-scented violet is a flower greatly esteemed, not only for its smell and colour, but especially for its use in sherbet, which, when the Easterns intend to entertain their guests in an elegant manner, is made of a solution of violet sugar. Snow, in the rinfrescos of a hot climate, is almost a constant ingredient ; thus in the Arabian Nights, Bedreddin Hassan, having filled a large porcelain bowl with sherbet of roses, put snow into it.

*A lamb stuffed with pistachios.* The same dish is mentioned in the Tale of the Barber's Sixth Brother.

*A parchment.* Parchments of the like mysterious import are frequent in the writings of the Easterns. One in particular amongst the Arabians is held in high veneration ; it was written by Ali and Giafar Sadek in mystic characters, and is said to contain the destiny of the Mahometan religion, and the great events which are to happen previous to the end of the world ; this parchment is of camel's skin ; but it was usual with Catherine of Medicis to carry about her person a legend in cabalistic characters, inscribed on the skin of a dead-born infant. Herbelot, p. 366 ; Wraxall's House of Valois.

Page 57. *Istakhar.* This city was the ancient Persepolis and capital of Persia, under the kings of the three first races. The author of Lebtarikh writes that Kischtab there established his abode, erected several temples to the element of fire, and hewed out for himself and his successors sepulchres in the rocks of the mountain contiguous to the city. The ruins of columns and broken figures which still remain, defaced as they were by Alexander, and mutilated by time, plainly evince that those ancient potentates had chosen it for the place of their interment ; their monuments, however, must not be confounded with the superb palace reared by queen Homai in the midst of Istakhar, which the Persians distinguish by the name of *Tchilmīnar*, or the forty watch-towers. The origin of this city is ascribed by some to Giamschid, and others carry it higher ; but the Persian tradition is that it was built by the peris or fairies when the world was governed by Gian ben Gian. Herbelot, p. 327.

*Gian Ben Gian.* By this appellation was distinguished the monarch of that species of beings whom the Arabians denomi-

nate *gian* or *ginn*, that is, *genii*, and the Tarikh Thabari, *peris*, *feez*, or *fairies*; he was renowned for his warlike expeditions and stupendous structures; according to oriental writers the pyramids of Egypt were amongst the monuments of his power. The buckler of this mighty sovereign, no less famous than that of Achilles, was employed by three successive Solimans to achieve their marvellous exploits; from them it descended to Tahamurath, surnamed Divbend, or Conquerer of the Giants. This buckler was endowed with most wonderful qualities, having been fabricated by talismanic art, and was alone sufficient to destroy all the charms and enchantments of demons or giants, which on the contrary were wrought by magic. Hence we are no longer at a loss for the origin of the wonderful shield of Atlante. The reign of Gian Ben Gian over the *peris* is said to have continued for two thousand years, after which Eblis was sent by the Deity to exile them on account of their disorders, and confine them in the remotest region of the earth. Herbelot, p. 396; Bailly sur l'Atlantide, p. 147.

*The talismans of Soliman.* Amongst the most famous talismans of the East, and which could control even the arms and magic of the dives or giants, was *mohur Solimani*, the seal or ring of Soliman Jared, fifth monarch of the world after Adam; by means of it the possessor had the entire command, not only of the elements, but also of demons and every created being. Richardson's Dissertat., p. 272; Herbelot, p. 820.

*Preadamite Sultans.* These monarchs, which were seventy-two in number, are said to have governed each a distinct species of rational beings prior to the existence of Adam. Amongst the most renowned of them were Soliman Raad, Soliman Daki, and Soliman Di Gian Ben Gian. Herbelot, p. 820.

*Beware how thou enterest any dwelling.* Strange as this injunction may seem, it is by no means incongruous to the customs of the country. Dr. Pococke mentions his travelling with the train of the governor of Faiume, who, instead of lodging in a village that was near, passed the night in a grove of palm trees. Travels, vol. i. p. 56.

*Every bumper, which they ironically quaffed to the health of Mahomet.* There are innumerable proofs that the Grecian custom, *συμπιειν κναθίζομενους*, prevailed amongst the Arabs; but, had these been wanted, Carathis could not be supposed a stranger to it; the practice was to hail the gods in the

first place, and then those who were held in the highest veneration; this they repeated as often as they drank; thus St. Ambrose: "Quid obtestationes potentium loquar? quid memorem sacramenta, quæ violare nefas arbitrantur? Bibamus, inquit, pro salute imperatorum; et qui non biberit, sit reus indevotionis."

*The ass of Balaam, the dog of the seven sleepers, and the other animals admitted into the paradise of Mahomet.* It was a tenet of the Mussulman creed that all animals would be raised again, and many of them honoured with admission to paradise. The story of the seven sleepers, borrowed from Christian legends, was this: In the days of the Emperor Decius there were certain Ephesian youths of a good family, who, to avoid the flames of persecution, fled to a secret cavern, and there slept for a number of years. In their flight towards the cave they were followed by a dog, which, when they attempted to drive him back, said: "I love those who are dear unto God; go sleep therefore, and I will guard you." For this dog the Mahometans retain so profound a reverence, that their harshest sarcasm against a covetous person is, "He would not throw a bone to the dog of the seven sleepers." It is even said that their superstition induces them to write his name upon the letters they send to a distance, as a kind of talisman to secure them a safe conveyance. Religious Ceremonies, vol. vii. p. 74, n.; Sale's Koran, ch. xviii. and notes.

*Painting the eyes of the Circassians.* It was an ancient custom in the East, and still continues, to tinge the eyes of women, particularly those of a fair complexion, with an impalpable powder prepared chiefly from crude antimony, and called *surmeh*. Ebni'l Motezz, in a passage translated by Sir W. Jones, hath not only ascertained its purple colour, but also likened the violet to it:

Viola collegit folia sua, similia  
Collyrio nigro, quod bibit lachrymas die discessus,  
Velut si esset super vasa in quibus fulgent  
Primæ ignis flammulæ in sulphuris extremis partibus.

This pigment, when applied to the inner surface of the lids, communicates to the eye (especially if seen by the light of lamps) so tender and fascinating a languor as no language is



competent to express.\* Hence the epithet *ιοβλεφαρος*, attributed by the Greeks † to the goddess of Beauty, and the Arabian comparison of "the eyelids of a fine woman bathed in tears, to violets dropping with dew." Perhaps also Shakespeare's

violets dim,

But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes

should be ultimately referred to the same origin; but, however this may be, it is obvious (though his commentators have overlooked it) that Anacreon alluded to the same cosmetic when he required of the painter that the eyelids of his mistress's portrait should, like her own, exhibit this appearance,

Εχεται δ', ὅπως ἐκείνη,  
Βλεφαρων ιτυν κελαινην,

and her eye both the bright citron ‡ of *Minerva's*, and the dewy radiance § of *Cytherea's*:

\* When Tasso represents Love as ambushed  
sotto all' ombra  
Delle palpebre

he allegorically alludes to that appearance in nature, which the artifice here described was meant to counterfeit.

† Both Homer and Hesiod have applied *ἑλικοβλεφαρος* to *Venus*, in a synonymous sense, as is evident from Pliny, who, amongst other properties of the helix, minutely specifies its *purplish* flowers. This *ὑπογραφὴ οφθαλμων* will likewise explain *ἑλικωπῖς*.

Winkelman and Grævius have each given different interpretations, but let them both speak for themselves: "Ἐλικοβλεφαρος caractérisé des yeux dont les paupieres ont un mouvement ondoyant que le poète compare au jeune ceps de la vigne."—*Hist. de l'Art de l'Antiq.*, tom. ii. p. 135. "Ἐλικοβλεφαροι et ἐλικωπιδες puellæ Græcis dicuntur, qui sunt mobili oculorum petulantia, ut Petron, loquitur, sive quæ habent, ut idem dicit:

blandos oculos et inquietos  
Et quadam propria nota loquaces.

Qui hinc Ovidio dicuntur arguti. Aliter plerique sentiunt, et exponunt: nigros oculos habentes. Sed ea vera est quam dixi hujus vocis notio, quam facile pluribus confirmarem, nisi res ipsa loqueretur."—*Lectiones Hesiodæ*, cap. xx.

‡ "Eyen, bright citrin."—CHAUCER. No expression can be less exact than blue-eyed when used as the characteristic of *Minerva*, nor any perhaps more so than Chaucer's; unless *γλανκωπῖς* be literally rendered.

§ *Ἵγρος*—ὁ ευκαταφορος, eis tas ἡδονας βενυματίζομενος.—*Gloss. Bibl. Coisl.*

Tasso, in his *Jerusalem*, has well paraphrased the import of this epithet:

Qual raggio in onda, le scintilla un riso  
Negli umidi occhj tremulo et lascivo.

Το δε βλεμμα νυν αληθως  
 Απο του πυρος ποιησον'  
 Αμα γλαυκον, ως αθηνης'  
 Αμα δ' υγρον, ως κυθηρης.\*

Page 58. *Rocnabad*. The stream thus denominated flows near the city of Schiraz; its waters are uncommonly pure and limpid, and their banks swarded with the finest verdure. Its praises are celebrated by Hafez in an animated song, which Sir W. Jones has admirably translated :

Boy, let yon liquid ruby flow,  
 And bid thy pensive heart be glad ;  
 Whate'er the frowning zealots say,  
 Tell them their Eden cannot show  
 A stream so clear as Rocnabad,  
 A bower so sweet as Mosellay.†

*Do you, with the advice of my mother, govern.* Females in the east were not anciently excluded from power. In the story of Zeyn Alasnam and the King of the Genii, the mother of Zeyn undertakes, with the aid of his viziers, to govern Balsora during his absence on a similar expedition.

Page 59. *Chintz and muslin*. For many curious particulars relative to these articles, consult Mr Delaval's Inquiry concerning the changes of colours, &c., to which may be added, Lucret. lib. iv. 5 ; Petron. c. 37 ; Martial, viii. ep. 28, 17, xiv. ep. 150 ; Plutarch in Vita Catonis ; Plin. viii. 48.

Page 60. *Serpents and scorpions*. Various accounts are given of the magical applications of these animals, and the power of sorcerers over them, to which even Solomon referred. Sir John Chardin relates, that at Surat an Armenian, having seen some of these creatures crawl and twine over the naked bodies of children belonging to the charmers, daringly hazarded the same experiment, but it soon proved fatal to him, for he was bitten, and died in the space of two hours.

*She amused herself in curing their wounds.* Clorin, in the Faithful Shepherdess of Fletcher, possessed the like skill :

Of all green wounds I know the remedies,  
 In men or cattle ; be they stung with snakes,

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\* Ode xxviii. 18 ; 2 Kings ix. 30 ; Ezek. xxiii. 40 ; Herbelot, p. 832 ; Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, let. xxix.

† Mossella was an oratory on the banks of Rocnabad.

Or charmed with powerful words of wicked art ;

These I can cure.

*Moullahs.* Those amongst the Mahometans who were bred to the law had this title ; and from their order the judges of cities and provinces were taken.

*The sacred Caaba.* That part of the temple at Mecca which is chiefly revered, and indeed gives a sanctity to the rest, is a square stone building called the Caaba, probably from its quadrangular form ; the length of this edifice from north to south is twenty-four cubits, and its breadth from east to west twenty-three ; the door is on the east side, and stands about four cubits from the ground, the floor being level with the threshold. The Caaba has a double roof, supported internally by three octangular pillars of aloes wood, between which on a bar of iron hangs a row of silver lamps ; the outside is covered with rich black damask, adorned with an embroidered band of gold ; this hanging, which is changed every year, was formerly sent by the caliphs. Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 152.

Page 62. *Bababalouk almost sunk with confusion, whilst, &c.* The heinousness of Vathek's profanation can only be judged of by an orthodox Mussulman, or one who recollects the ablution and prayer indispensably required on the exoneration of nature. Sale's Prelim. Disc., p. 139 ; Al Koran, ch. 4 ; Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire, p. 93.

*The tapestry that hung before the door.* This kind of curtain, at first restricted to the serail or palace, was afterwards adopted by the great, and gradually became of general use. The author of *Leb Tarikh* relates that Lohorashb, king of Persia, having granted to the great officers of his household and army the privilege of giving audience on seats of gold, reserved to himself the right of the *seraperdeh*, or curtain, which was hung before the throne to conceal him from the eyes of his subjects, and thereby preserve their reverence for his person. In later times, the daughter of a law professor, who occasionally in her father's absence filled his chair, had recourse to the same expedient, lest the charms of her face should distract her pupils' attention. Abbé de Sade's *Memoirs de Petrarque*, tom. i. p. 42.

*The supposed oratory.* The dishonouring such places as had an appearance of being devoted to religious purposes, by con-

verting them to the most abject offices of nature, was an Oriental method of expressing contempt, and hath continued from remote antiquity. Harmer's Observations, vol. ii. p. 493.

*Regale these pious poor souls with my good wine from Schiraz.* The prohibition of wine in the Koran is so rigidly observed by the conscientious, especially if they have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, that they deem it sinful to press grapes for the purpose of making it, and even to use the money arising from its sale. Chardin, Voy. de Perse, tom. ii. p. 212. Schiraz was famous in the East for its wines of different sorts, but particularly for its red, which was esteemed more highly than even the white wine of Kismische.

Page 63. *The Caliph, to enjoy so flattering a sight, supped gaily on the roof.* Dr. Pococke relates that he was entertained at Galilee by the steward of the Sheik, with whom he supped on the top of the house. From a similar motive to Vathek's, Nebuchadnezzar is represented by Daniel as contemplating his capital from the summit of his palace when he uttered that exulting apostrophe: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?"

Page 65. *The most stately tulips of the East.* The tulip is a flower of Eastern growth, and there held in great estimation; thus in an ode of Mesîhi: "The edge of the bower is filled with the light of Ahmed; among the plants the fortunate tulips represent his companions."

Page 65. *Eunuchs in the rear.* As the black eunuchs were the inseparable attendants of the ladies, the rear was consequently their post; so in the argument to the poem of Amriolkais: "One day when her tribe had struck their tents, and were changing their station, the women as usual came behind the rest, with the servants and baggage in carriages fixed on the backs of camels."

*Certain cages of ladies.* There are many passages of the Moallakat in which these cages are fully described; thus, in the poem of Lebeid: "How were thy tender affections raised when the damsels of the tribe departed, when they hid themselves in carriages of cotton, like antelopes in their lair, and the tents as they were struck gave a piercing sound! They were concealed in vehicles whose sides were well covered with awnings and carpets, with fine-spun curtains and pictured veils." Again Zohair: "Look, my friend! dost thou not discern a

company of maidens seated on camels, and advancing over the high ground above the streams of Jortham? They leave on their right the mountains and rocky plains of Kenaan. Oh! how many of my bitter foes, and how many of my firm allies, does Kenaan contain! They are mounted in carriages covered with costly awnings and with rose-coloured veils, the lining of which have the hue of crimson Andemwood. They now appear by the valley of Subaan, and now they pass through it; the trappings of all their camels are new and large. When they ascend from the bosom of the vale they sit forward on the saddle-cloths, with every mark of a voluptuous gaiety." Moallakat, by Sir W. Jones, pp. 46, 35; see also Lady M. W. Montague, let. xxvi.

*Swagging somewhat awry.* Amriolkais, in the first poem of the Moallakat, hath related a similar adventure: "On that happy day I entered the carriage, the carriage of Onaiza, who said, 'Woe to thee! thou wilt compel me to travel on foot.' She added, while the vehicle was bent aside with our weight, 'O Amriolkais, descend, or my beast also will be killed!' I answered, 'Proceed, and loosen his rein, nor withhold from me the fruits of thy love, which again and again may be tasted with rapture. Many a fair one like thee, though not like thee a virgin, have I visited by night.'"

*Dislodged.* Our language wants a verb equivalent to the French *denicher*, to convey in this instance the precise sense of the author.

Page 66. *Those nocturnal insects which presage evil.* It is observable that in the 5th verse of the 91st Psalm, the terror by night is rendered in the old English version the bugge by night.\*

\* Instances are not wanted, both in the English and Greek versions, where the translators have modified the sense of the original by their own preconceived opinions. To this source may be ascribed the bugge of our Bible, and (δαίμονιον μεσημέρινον) the noon-day demon of the seventy, unless the copies of the latter be supposed to have read, not יָשׁוּר but יָשׁוּר. If the terror by night be taken in connection with the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and both opposed to the arrow that flieth by day and the destruction that wasteth at noon, it will seem to imply the dread of real evil only, which may be explained in the language of the poet by

Night, and all her sickly dews.

But if the rendering of our old version, adopting that of the Seventy, be founded, it will also include the imaginary evils that follow:

Her spectres wan and birds of boding cry.

the first settled parts of North America, every nocturnal fly of a noxious quality is still generically named a bug, whence the term bugbear signifies one that carries terror wherever he goes. Beezlebub, or the Lord of flies, was an Eastern appellative given to the devil, and the nocturnal sound called by the Arabians azif was believed to be the howling of demons. Analogous to this is a passage in Comus, as it stood in the original copy :

But for the damned magician, let him be girt  
With all the grisly legions that troop  
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,  
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous buggs  
'Twixt Africa and Inde, I'll find him out.

*The locusts were heard from the thickets on the plain of Catoul.* The insects here mentioned are of the same species with the *Terrig* of the Greeks, and the *Cicada* of the Latins, and are called locusts from their having been so denominated by the first English settlers in America.

*Halted on the banks of the Tigris.* It is a practice in the East, and especially when large parties journey together, to halt if possible in the vicinity of a stream ; thus Zohair : "They rose at daybreak ; they proceeded at early dawn ; they are advancing towards the valley of Ras directly and surely as the hand to the mouth. Now when they have reached the brink of yon blue gushing rivulet, they fix the poles of their tents, like the Arab, in a settled mansion."

*The heavens looked angry, &c.* This tempest may be deemed somewhat the more violent from a supposition that Mahomet interfered ; which will appear the more probable, if the circumstance of its obliterating the road \* be considered. William of Tyre hath recorded one of a similar kind that visited Baldwin in his expedition against Damascus : "He, against whose will all projects are vain, suddenly overspread the sky with darkness, poured down such torrents of rain, and so entirely effaced the roads, that scarce any hope of escaping remained. These disasters were indeed portended by a gloominess in the air,

\* Exclusive, however, of preternatural interference, it frequently happens that a sudden blast will arise on the vast deserts of the East, and sweep away in its eddies the tracks of the last passenger, whose camel therefore in vain for the wanderer that follows,

"Liquit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis."



lowering clouds, irregular gusts of wind, increasing thunders, and incessant lightnings, but as the mind of man knows not what may befall him, these admonitions of Heaven were slighted and opposed."—*Gesta Dei per Francos*, p. 849.

Page 67. *He determined to cross over the craggy heights, &c., to Rocnabad.* Oriental travellers have sometimes recourse to these expedients for the sake of abridging the toils of their journeys; hence Amgrad, in the Arabian Nights, who had himself been about six weeks in travelling from the isle of Ebene, could not comprehend the possibility of coming in less time, unless by enchantment, or crossing the mountains, which from the difficulty of the pass were but seldom traversed.

Page 68. *Tigers and vultures.* The ravages of these animals in the East are almost incredible.

Before them, Death with shrieks directs their way,  
Fills the wild yell and leads them to their prey.

From the earliest days they have been the constant attendants on scenes of carnage. In the sacred writings, David threatens "to give the hosts of the Philistines to the fowls of the air, and the wild beasts of the earth." Antara boasts at the close of a conflict of "having left the father of his foes, like a victim, to be mangled by the lions of the wood, and the eagles\* advanced in years." And in the narrative of the prisoners taken at Bendore, the author relates that many of them were devoured by tigers and vultures.

*Valhek—with two little pages.* "All the pages of the seraglio are sons of Christians made slaves in time of war in their most tender age. The incursions of robbers in the confines of Circassia afford the means of supplying the seraglio, even in times of peace." Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire, p. 157. That the pages here mentioned were Circassians, appears from the description of their complexion: more fair than the enamel of Franguestan.

\* Finely as Gray conceived the idea of the eagle awe-struck at the corpses of the bards, there is a languor in his expression that wants to be removed. Milton, as his best editor judiciously remarks, applied (he might have said confined) the verb hurry to preternatural motion or imaginary beings; adopting it therefore in a kindred sense, might we not (for passes) advantageously read

"The famished eagle screams, and hurries by."

Page 69. *Confectioners and cooks.* What their precise number might have been in Vathek's establishment it is not now easy to determine, but in the household of the present grand Seigneur there are not fewer than a hundred and ninety. Habesci's State, p. 145.

*Torches were lighted, &c.* Mr. Marsden relates, in his History of Sumatra, that tigers prove most fatal and destructive enemies to the inhabitants, particularly in their journeys; and adds that the numbers annually slain by those rapacious tyrants of the woods is almost incredible. As these tremendous enemies are alarmed at the appearance of fire, it is usual for the natives to carry a splendid kind of torch, chiefly to frighten them, and also to make a blaze with wood in different parts round their villages. P. 149.

Page 70. *One of the forests which bordered their way took fire.* Accidents of this kind in Persia are not unfrequent. "It was an ancient practice with the kings and great men to set fire to large bunches of dry combustibles, fastened round wild beasts and birds, which being then let loose the air and earth appeared one great illumination; and as those terrified creatures naturally fled to the woods for shelter, it is easy to conceive that conflagrations which would often happen must have been peculiarly destructive." Richardson's Dissertation, p. 185. In the 83rd Psalm, v. 14, there is a reference to one of those fires, though arising from another cause; and Homer likewise has taken a simile from thence:

Ηντε πυρ Αιδηλον επιφλεγει ασπετον ὕλην  
Ουρεος εν κορυφης' ἑκαθεν δε τε φαινεται αυγη.

Il. B. 455.

*Hath seen some part of our bodies, and, what is worse, our very faces.* "I was informed," writes Dr. Cooke, "that the Persian women in general would sooner expose to public view any part of their bodies than their faces." Voyages and Travels, vol. ii. p. 443.

Page 72. *Cakes baked in silver ovens for his royal mouth.* Portable ovens were a part of the furniture of eastern travellers; St. Jerome (on Lament. v. 10) hath particularly described

them. The Caliph's were of the same kind, only substituting silver for brass. Dr. Pococke mentions his having been entertained in an Arabian camp with cakes baked for him. In what the peculiarity of the royal bread consisted it is not easy to determine, but in one of the Arabian tales a woman, to gratify her utmost desire, wishes to become the wife of the Sultan's baker, assigning for the reason that she might have her fill of that bread which is called the Sultan's. Vol. iv. p. 269.

*Vases of snow, and grapes from the banks of the Tigris.* It was customary in Eastern climates, and especially in the sultry season, to carry when journeying supplies of snow. These *æstivæ nives* (as Mamertinus styles them) being put into separate vases, were by that means better kept from the air, as no more was opened at once than might suffice for immediate use; to preserve the whole from solution, the vessels that contained it were secured in packages of straw. *Gesta Dei*, p. 1098. Vathek's ancestor, the Caliph Mahadi, in the pilgrimage to Mecca, which he undertook from ostentation rather than devotion, loaded upon camels so prodigious a quantity as was not only sufficient for himself and his attendants amidst the burning sands of Arabia, but also to preserve in their natural freshness the various fruits he took with him, and to ice all their drink whilst he stayed at Mecca, the greater part of whose inhabitants had never seen snow till then. *Anecdotes Arabes*, p. 326.

*Roasted wolf, &c.* In the poem of Amriolkais a repast is described, which in manner of preparation resembles the present: "He soon brings us up to the foremost of the beasts, and leaves the rest far behind, nor has the herd time to disperse itself. He runs from wild bulls to wild heifers, and overpowers them in a single heat, without being bathed or even moistened with sweat. Then the busy cook dresses the game, roasting part, baking part on hot stones, and quickly boiling the rest in a vessel of iron." Disgusting as this reflection of Vathek may be thought, Atlante boasts to Ruggiero of having fed him from his infancy on a similar diet:

Di midolle già d' orsi e di leoni  
Ti porsi io dunque li primi alimenti?

and we read that lion's flesh was prescribed to Vathek, but on a different occasion. *Anecdot. Arab.* p. 419. The vegetables

that made part of this entertainment were such as the Koran hath ordained to be food for the damned.

Page 73. *Dropped their fans on the ground.* Attendants for the same purpose are mentioned in the story of the King of the Black Isles: "One day when she was at bath I found myself sleepy after dinner, and lay down upon a sofa; two of her ladies who were then in my chamber came and sat down, one at my head and the other at my feet, with fans in their hands to moderate the heat, and to hinder the flies from disturbing my slumber." The comfort of such an attendant in the hour of repose can be known only in the climes of intolerable day.

*Horrible Kaf.* This mountain, which in reality is no other than Caucasus, was supposed to surround the earth like a ring encompassing a finger; the sun was believed to rise from one of its eminences (as over Oeta, by the Latin poets) and to set on the opposite, whence from Kaf to Kaf signified from one extremity of the earth to the other. The fabulous historians of the East affirm that this mountain was founded upon a stone called *Sakhrat*, one grain of which, according to Lokman, would enable the possessor to work wonders; this stone is further described as the pivot of the earth, and said to be one vast emerald, from the refraction of whose beams the heavens derive their azure. It is added, that whenever God would excite an earthquake, he commands the stone to move one of its fibres (which supply in it the office of nerves) and that being moved, the part of the earth connected with it quakes, is convulsed, and sometimes expands; such is the philosophy of the Koran! The *Tarikh Tabari*, written in Persian, analogous to the same tradition, relates that, were it not for this emerald the earth would be liable to perpetual commotions, and unfit for the abode of mankind. To arrive at the Kaf a vast region, far from the sun and summer gale, must be traversed; over this dark and cheerless desert the way is inextricable without the direction of supernatural guidance. Here the dives or giants were confined after their defeat by the first heroes of the human race, and here also the peries, or fairies, are supposed in ordinary to reside. Sukrage the giant was king of Kaf, and had Rucail, one of the children of Adam, for his prime minister. The giant Argenk, likewise, from the time that Tahamurah made war upon him, reigned here, and

reared a superb palace in the city of Aherman, with galleries on whose walls were painted the creatures that inhabited the world prior to the formation of Adam. Herbelot, p. 230, &c.

*The Simurgh.* This is that wonderful bird of the East concerning which so many marvels are told; it was not only endowed with reason, but possessed also the knowledge of every language; hence, it may be concluded to have been a dive in a borrowed form. This creature relates of itself that it had seen the great revolution of seven thousand years twelve times commence and close; and that in its duration, the world had been seven times void of inhabitants, and as often replenished. The Simurgh is represented as a great friend to the race of Adam, and not less inimical to the dives. Tahamurath and Aherman were apprised by its predictions of all that was destined to befall them, and from it they obtained the promise of assistance in every undertaking. Armed with the buckler of Gian Ben Gian, Tahamurath was borne by it through the air over the dark desert to Kaf. From its bosom his helmet was crested with plumes, which the most renowned warriors have ever since worn. In every conflict the Simurgh was invulnerable, and the heroes it favoured never failed of success; though possessed of power sufficient to exterminate its foes, yet the exertion of that power was supposed to be forbidden. Sadi, a serious author, gives it as an instance of the universality of Providence, that the Simurgh, notwithstanding its immense bulk, is at no loss for sustenance on the mountain of Kaf. Inatulla hath described Getiafroze, queen of the genii, as seated on a golden chariot, drawn by ten Simurghs, whose wings extended wide as the earth-shading bir,\* and whose

\* Or Banian, to which the epithet of Inatulla most emphatically belongs. Milton hath accurately described this extraordinary tree, though by another name:

The fig-tree—not that kind for fruit renowned :  
But, such as at this day to Indians known,  
In Malabar or Decan, spreads her arms,  
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground  
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow  
About the mother tree : a pillared shade  
High over-arched and echoing walks between.

Was it not from hence that Warburton framed his hypothesis on the origin of Gothic architecture? At least, here were materials sufficient for a fancy less forgetive than his. Mr. Ives, in his journey from Persia,

talons resembled the proboscis of mighty elephants ; but it does not appear from any other writer that there ever was more than one, which is frequently called the marvellous gryphon, and said to be like that imaginary monster. Herbelot, p. 1017, 810, &c. ; Tales of Inatulla, vol. ii. pp. 71, 72. As the magic shield of Atlante resembles the buckler of Gian Ben Gian,

thus speaks of this vegetable wonder : " This is the Indian's sacred tree. It grows to a prodigious height, and its branches spread a great way ; the limbs drop down fibres, which take root and become another tree, united by its branches to the first, and so continue to do, until the trees cover a great extent of ground : the arches which those different stocks make are Gothic, like those we see in Westminster Abbey ; the stocks not being single, but appearing as if composed of many stocks, are of a great circumference. There is a certain solemnity accompanying those trees, nor do I remember that I was ever under the cover of any of them, but that my mind was at the time impressed with a reverential awe ! " Page 460. From the

Pillared shade high over-arched, and echoing walks between,  
as well as the

Highest woods, impenetrable to star or sun-light

just before mentioned, and the name given to the tree, it is probable that the poet's description was principally founded on the account of Duret, who in the chapter *Du Figuier d' Inde* of his singular book (entitled, "*Histoire admirable des plantes et herbes esmerueillables et miraculeuses en nature*," et à Paris, 1605), thus writes : " Sa grosseur est quelquefois telle, que trois hommes ne le scauroient embrasser ; quelquefois vn ou deux de ces figuiers font un bois avez grand, toffu, et ombraguex, dans lequel les rayons du soleil ne peuuent aucunement penetrer, durant les chaleurs d'esté et font ces figuiers infinies tonnes et cabinets si concaues et couuerts de feuilles et de sinuositez [aisles and recesses, so arched over with foliage and embowed ramifications] qu'il s'y forme des echos ou reuerberations de voix et sons, jusques à trois fois ; et est telle la moindre d'un seul ombre de ses arbres, qu'elle peut contenir soubz soy à couuert huict cens ou mil personnes, et la plus grande ombre, trois mil hommes." P. 124. This tree might well be styled the earth-shading.\*

Though the early architecture of our island be confessedly of a doubtful origin, it nevertheless deserves to be noted that the resemblance between the columns of the ruined chancel at Orford and those of *Tauk Kesserah* on the banks of the *Tigris* is much too strict to be merely casual ; it may be added that the arches of this edifice, and their ornaments, are of the style we call the early Norman.

\* " The following is an account of the dimensions of a remarkable *Banyan tree* near *Manjee*, twenty miles west of *Patna* in *Bengal*. Diameter 363 to 375 feet ; circumference of its shadow at noon, 1116 feet ; circumference of the several stems (in number 50 or 60) 921 feet." *Marsden's History of Sumatra*, p. 131.



so his Ippogrif apparently came from the Simurgh, notwithstanding the reference of Ariosto to the veridical archbishop :

Non ho veduto mai, nè letto altrove,  
Fuor che in Turpin, d'un sì fatto animale.

*Palampores, &c.* These elegant productions, which abound in all parts of the East, were of very remote antiquity; not only are *συνθονας ευανθεις*, finely flowered linens, noticed by Strabo, but Herodotus relates that the nations of Caucasus adorned their garments with figures of various creatures by means of the sap of certain vegetables, which, when macerated and diluted with water, communicate colours that cannot be washed out, and are no less permanent than the texture itself. Strabo, l. xv. p. 709; Herodot., l. i. p. 96. The Arabian Tales repeatedly describe these “fine linens of India, painted in the most lively colours, and representing beasts, trees, flowers, &c.” Arab. Nights, vol. iv. p. 217, &c.

*Afrits.* These were a kind of Medusa, or Lamia, supposed to be the most terrible and cruel of all the orders of the dives. Herbelot, p. 66.

Page 74. *Tablets fraught with preternatural qualities.* Mr. Richardson observes, “that in the East men of rank in general carried with them pocket astronomical tables, which they consulted on every affair of moment.” These tablets, however, were of the magical kind, and such as often occur in works of romance. Thus in Boiardo, Orlando receives from the father of the youth he had rescued a book that would solve all doubts; and in Ariosto, Logistilla bestows upon Astolpho a similar directory. The books which Carathis turned over with Morakanabad were imagined to have possessed the like virtues.

*Dwarfs.* Such unfortunate beings as are thus “curtailed of fair proportion,” have been for ages an appendage of eastern grandeur. One part of their office consists in the instruction of the pages, but their principal duty is the amusement of their master. If a dwarf happen to be a mute he is much esteemed, but if he be also a eunuch he is regarded as a prodigy, and no pains or expense is spared to obtain him. Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire, p. 164, &c.

*A cabin of rushes and canes.* Huts of this sort are mentioned by Ludeke, in his *Expositio brevis* Loc. Script., p. 51.

Tuguriola seu palis, fruticibus viridibus, vel juncis circumdatis et tectis, amboque quidem facillimè construuntur.

*A small spring supplies us with Abdest, and we daily repeat prayers, &c.* Amongst the indispensable rules of the Mahometan faith, ablution is one of the chief; this rite is divided into three kinds; the first, performed before prayers, is called abdest; it begins with washing both hands, and repeating these words: "Praised be Allah, who created clean water, and gave it the virtue to purify; he also hath rendered our faith conspicuous." This done, water is taken in the right hand thrice, and the mouth being washed the worshipper subjoins: "I pray thee, O Lord, to let me taste of that water which thou hast given to thy Prophet Mahomet in Paradise, more fragrant than musk, whiter than milk, sweeter than honey, and which has the power to quench for ever the thirst of him that drinks it." This petition is accompanied with sniffing a little water into the nose; the face is then three times washed, and behind the ears; after which water is taken with both hands, beginning with the right, and thrown to the elbow; the washing of the crown next follows, and the apertures of the ear with the thumbs; afterwards the neck with all the fingers; and finally the feet; in this last operation it is held sufficient to wet the sandal only. At each ceremonial a suitable petition is offered, and the whole concludes with this: "Hold me up firmly, O Lord! and suffer not my foot to slip, that I may not fall from the bridge into hell." Nothing can be more exemplary than the attention with which these rites are performed; if an involuntary cough or sneeze interrupt them, the whole service is begun anew, and that as often as it happens. Habesci, p. 91, &c.

*Reading the holy Koran.* The Mahometans have a book of stops or pauses in reading the Koran, which divides it into seventeen sections, and allows of no more. Herbelot, p. 915.

*The bells of a cafila.* A cafila, or caravan, according to Pitts, is divided into distinct companies, at the head of which an officer, or person of distinction, is carried in a kind of horse litter, and followed by a sumpter camel loaded with his treasure; this camel hath a bell fastened to either side, the sound of which may be heard at a considerable distance; others have bells on their necks and their legs, to solace them when drooping with heat and fatigue. Inatulla, also, in his tales hath a

similar reference : "The bells of the cafla may be rung in the thirsty desert." Vol. ii. p. 15.

Page 75. *Deggial*. This word signifies properly a liar and impostor, but is applied by Mahometan writers to their antichrist. He is described as having but one eye and eyebrow, and on his forehead the radicals of cafer (or infidel) are said to be impressed. According to the traditions of the faithful, his first appearance will be between Irak and Syria, mounted on an ass ; seventy thousand Jews from Ispahan are expected to follow him ; his continuance on earth is to be forty days ; all places are to be destroyed by him and his emissaries, except Mecca or Medina, which will be protected by angels from the general overthrow ; at last, however, he will be slain by Jesus, who is to encounter him at the gate of Lud. Herbelot, p. 282 ; Sale's Prelim. Disc., p. 106.

*Dictated by the blessed Intelligence*. That is, the angel Gabriel. The Mahometans deny that the Koran was composed by their prophet ; it being their general and orthodox belief that it is of divine original, nay, even eternal and uncreated, remaining in the very essence of God ; that the first transcript has been from everlasting by his throne, written on a table of immense size called the preserved table, on which are also recorded the divine decrees, past and future ; that a copy was by the ministry of the angel Gabriel sent down to the lowest heaven, in the month of Ramadan, on the night of power ; from whence Gabriel revealed it to Mahomet by parcels, some at Mecca, and some at Medina. Al Koran, ch. ii. &c. ; Sale's Prelim. Disc., p. 85.

*Hath culled with his own hands these melons, &c.* The great men of the East have ever been, what Herodotus shrewdly styled them, *Δωροφαγοί*, or gift-eaters ; for no visitor can approach them with empty hands. In such a climate and situation, what present could be more acceptable to Vathek than this refreshing collation ?

*To kiss the fringe of thy consecrated robe*. This observance was an act of the most profound reverence. Arabian Nights, vol. iv. p. 236, &c.

*Fakreddin's spring residence*. It has long been customary for the Arabs to change their habitations with the seasons. Thus Antara : "Thou hast possessed thyself of my heart ;

thou hast fixed thy abode, and art settled there, as a beloved and cherished inhabitant. Yet how can I visit my fair one whilst her family have their vernal mansion in Oneizatain, and mine are stationed in Ghaillem?" Xenophon relates, in his *Anabasis*, that it was customary for the kings of Persia, *θερίζειν και εριζειν*, to pass the summer and spring in Susa and Ecbatana; and Plutarch observes further that their winters were spent in Babylon, their summers in Media (that is, Ecbatana), and the pleasantest part of spring in Susa: *Καιτοι τουσγε Περσων βασιλεας εμακαριζον εν Βαβυλωνι τον χειμωνα διαγοντας· εν δε Μηδια το θερος. εν δε Σουσοις, το ηδιστον του εαρος.* De Exil., p. 604. This το 'ηδιστον of the vernal season is exquisitely described by Solomon: "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over; it is gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the season of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

*An emerald set in lead.* As nothing at the opening of spring can exceed the luxuriant vegetation of these irriguous valleys, so no term could be chosen more expressive of their verdure. The prophet Ezekiel, emblematising Tyre under the symbol of Paradise, hath described by the different gems of the East the flowers that variegate its surface, and particularly by the emerald its green: "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: **יָקָרָה מַסְכַּתְךָ כָּל־אֲבָן** thy carpet was an assemblage of every precious stone, the ruby, topaz, and the diamond, the chrysolite, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald."\* Ch. xxviii. 13. It hath not perhaps been hitherto observed, that the paradise of Ariosto was copied from hence:

Zaffir, rubini, oro, topazj, e perle,  
E diamanti, e chrysoliti, e giacinti

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\* The same kind of imagery abounds in the Oriental poets. Thus Abu Nawas: "Behold the gardens of the earth, and consider the emblems of those things which Divine power hath formed; eyes of silver (daisies) everywhere disclosed, with pupils like molten gold, united to an emerald stalk; these avouch that no one is equal to God." So likewise Sadi: "He hath planted rubies and emeralds on the hard rock; the ruby rose on its emerald stem." And Ebn Rumi, of the violet: "It is not a flower, but an emerald bearing a purple gem."

Potriano i fiori assimigliar, che per le  
 Liete piagge v'avea l'aura dipinti.  
 Si verdi l'erbe, che potendo averle  
 Qua giù, ne foran gli smeraldi vinti.

Canto xxxiv. st. 49.

When Gray, in his description of Grasmere, spoke of its "meadows green as an emerald," he might have added also the circumstance noted by our author—beset with mountains of the hue of lead. Shakespeare, in a similar comparison, hath denominated our green England,

This precious stone set in the silver sea.

Page 76. *Sugar*. Dr. Pococke mentions the sugar-cane as a great dessert in Egypt; and adds that, besides coarse loaf sugar and sugar candy, it yields a third sort remarkably fine, which is sent to the Grand Seignior, and prepared only for himself. Travels, vol. i. pp. 183, 204. The jeweller's son, in the story of the Third Calender, desires the prince to fetch some melon and sugar, that he might refresh himself with them. Arab. Nights, vol. i. p. 159.

*Red Characters*. The laws of Draco are recorded by Plutarch, in his life of Solon, to have been written in blood. If more were meant by this expression than that those laws were of a sanguinary nature, they will furnish the earliest instance of the use of red characters, which were afterwards considered as appropriate to supreme authority, and employed to denounce some requisition or threatening design to strike terror. According to Suidas, this manner of writing was likewise practised in magic rites: hence their application in the instance here mentioned. Trots in Herm. Hugonem, pp. 106, 307; Suidas sub voc. Θεσσαλη γυνή.

*Thy body shall be spit upon*. There was no mark of contempt amongst the Easterns so ignominious as this. Arab. Nights, vol. i. p. 115; vol. iv. p. 275. It was the same in the days of Job. Herodotus relates of the Medes Πιτυειν αντιον Αισχρον εστι, and Xenophon relates Αισχρον εστι Περσαις το Αποπτυνειν. Hence the reason is evident for spitting on our Saviour.

*Bats shall engender in thy belly*. Bats in these countries were very abundant, and both from their numbers and nature held in abhorrence. See what is related of them by Thevenot,

part i. pp. 132, 133. Egmont and Hayman, vol. ii. p. 87, and other travellers in the East.

Page 77. *The Bismillah*. This word (which is prefixed to every chapter of the Koran except the ninth) signifies In the name of the most merciful God. It became not the initiatory formula of prayer till the time of Moez the Fatimite. Herbelot, p. 326. *Ablution* is of an origin long prior to Mahomet; it is mentioned in Homer, and alluded to by the Psalmist: "I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." Again: "Verily have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency."

Page 78. *A vast wood of palm-trees*. Perhaps the palm is nowhere more abundant than in this region, that only excepted to which Virgil refers, in a passage as yet not explained:

Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas.

If the ingenuousness and delicacy of a right reverend critic (who is said to have owed his present dignity to a note on the context) had not been long known,\* an ordinary reader might be startled at the resemblance between his lordship's critique and Catrou's, whilst a fastidious one in a splenetic mood might apply, like another Edwards, the Marks of Imitation as so many canons to annoy their founder. The hypothesis, however, of Hartley, Priestley, and those other physiologists who have so clearly deduced the phenomena of mind from organisation, and traced back the coincidences of thought to predisposing motives and similar associations, will enable us on the idea of an internal conformity between the critics, to account for their congruity of writing, without leaving room to surmise that the one ever heard of the other. Not a breath then of Achan and his wedge of gold! Catrou, supposing that Virgil meditated the improvement of his writings after an excursion to Greece and Asia, translates ego in patriam rediens, by à mon retour en Italie; but the restricted sense in which the poet delights to apply patria (as in his first Eclogue:

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\* See the tract intituled "On the Delicacy of Friendship, a seventh dissertation, addressed to the author of the sixth."



Nos patriæ fines, et dulcia linquimus arva,  
Nos patriam fugimus—)

as well as the mention of Mantua and the Mincius, precludes this more extended construction; if, therefore, ego in patriam rediens be literally taken, it will rather mark the design of Virgil to retire from Rome to the sequestered scenes of his native Mantua, where he was first smitten with the love of song, and whither he purposes to bring the sisterhood of the Muses, but the clause least understood is that which immediately follows :

Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas.

Catrou hath inferred from it that Virgil actually projected a voyage to the Levant; to fetch palms, no doubt! The bishop, however, after remarking that the poet having held himself forth as a conqueror, and declared the object of his conquest to have been bringing the Muses captive from Greece, subjoins, "the palmy triumphal entry, which was usual to victors on their return from foreign successes, follows :

Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas."

But with the deference due to so venerable a critic, will this explication suffice? for may it not be asked, If to celebrate a triumph for foreign successes palms from Idumæa were requisite? If victors were accustomed to go thither for them previous to their triumphal entry? Or (allowing Idumæas to be, sine mente sonum, a word without meaning \*) how could it happen that the palmy triumphal entry should have been usual to victors, and yet Virgil the first whose success was to be graced with it?

Primus Idumæas referam—palmas.

It is observable that this book of the Georgics opens with proposing its subject, the novelty of which induces the author to remark that, as the usual themes of the Roman poets were all become trite, it would be his aim to seek fame from foreign

\* Thus also Martyn, because Idumæa was famous for palms, interprets Idumæas palmas, "palms in general;" and Heyne: "Idumæas autem palmas poetico plane epitheto appellabat, a nobili aliquo genere;" yet he immediately adds: "Idumen poetæ pro Idumæa ac tota Judæa dicunt, quam quidem palmis frequentem fuisse notum est:—arbusto palmarum dives Idume. Lucan. iii. 216."

acquisitions, and his purpose to aggrandise the glory of his country by subjecting to its language the poetical beauties of Greece and Judea.

If it be admitted that, under the allegory of leading the Muses (who were peculiar to Greece) from the summit of the Aonian mount, the poet intended to characterise the loftiest flights of Grecian poetry, or the epic,\* it follows from parity of reason that, under the symbol of their country, † he equally designed the prophetic strains of the Hebrews :

Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit,  
Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas :  
Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas.

The verb *referam* in connection with *tibi Mantua*, implies that Virgil had already brought Idumæan palms to his natal soil, and what these meant is abundantly plain ; for whoever will compare the 4th Eclogue with the prophecy of Isaiah, must perceive too close an agreement to suppose that the same images, under similar combinations, and both new to a Roman poet, should have occurred to Virgil rather from chance than a previous perusal of the prophet ‡ in Greek. It only remains then to be inquired whether Virgil, after having introduced in his Pastorals some of the prophetic traits of Hebrew poetry, any further availed himself of it in the Epic here projected ? For a satisfactory answer to this question it might suffice to

\* It was in this light that the *Æneis* was regarded by Propertius, who exclaims in reference to it (B. ii. El. xxxiv. v. 65),

Cedite Graii,  
Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade !

The author of an elegant and masterly pamphlet, entitled, “Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the *Eneid*” (published by Elmsly, 1770) supposes Propertius in the context to have had his eye on the shield of *Æneas* ; but from comparing the passage itself with the Sixth Elegy of the Fourth Book, it appears more likely that he alluded to the battle of Actium, as described in *Æn.* viii. 704.

† It was by this emblem that the Romans on their coins represented Judæa ; and particularly on the medal, to signalise its reduction :

“Beneath her palm here sad Judæa weeps.”

‡ Tacitus mentions the Ancient Scriptures of the Jewish Priests, as containing the prediction which Virgil is here supposed to have adopted. *Hist.* l. v. § 13.

reply, that if there be any characteristic which discriminates the *Æneid* more than another, it is the prophetic :

In medio mihi Cæsar erit, templumque tenebit.

As in the *Pollio*, the images employed by the prophet to prefigure the birth of the Messiah and the blessings of his reign, were applied by the Roman poet to the birth of the expected son of Augustus \* and the return of the golden age under his auspices ; so in the *Æneid*, he resumes the prediction, and applies it to Augustus himself :

Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti sæpius audis,  
Augustus Cæsar, Divi genus ; aurea condet  
Sæcula qui rursus Latio, regnata per arva  
Saturno quondam ; super et Garamantas et Indos  
Proferet Imperium. Jacet extra sidera tellus,  
Extra anni solisque vias, &c.

*Æn.* VI. 792.

*Inscription.* Inscriptions of this sort are still retained ; thus Ludeke, “Interni non solum Divani pluriumque conclavium parietes, sed etiam frontispicia super portas inscriptiones habent.”—*Expositio*, p. 54. In the history of Amine we find an inscription over a gate in letters of gold, analogous to this of Fakreddin : “Here is the abode of everlasting pleasures and content.” *Arab. Nights*, vol. i. p. 193.

*A magnificent taktrevan.* This kind of moving throne, though more common at present than in the days of Vathek, is still confined to persons of the highest rank.

*Her light brown hair floated in the hazy breeze of the twilight.* Literally hyacinthine ; the metaphor taken from this flower expressed by the word sunbul, is familiar to the Arabians. Thus, in Sir William Jones’s *Solima*, an eclogue made up of eastern images :

The fragrant hyacinths of Azza’s hair,  
That wanton with the laughing summer air—

Nor was it less common to the Greeks ; perhaps Milton in the following lines—

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\* By Scribonia, then pregnant of the infamous Julia. See Bishop Chandler’s *Vindication*, and Masson’s *Dissertation* subjoined.

Hyacinthin locks  
Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad—

adopted it from Lucian. The term manly, with the restriction at the close, gives full scope for this conjecture, as in Lucian the descriptions relate only to women. The poet may be further traced upon the snow of the classics in the use of the term clustering, an equivalent expression being appropriated by the ancients to that disposition of the curls which resembles the growth of grapes, and may be observed on gems, coins, and statues. Plutarch, *Consol. Apoll.*, p. 196. It is singular that both lexicographers and critics should have considered *Βοτρυοχαΐτης* and *Βοτρυοκοσμος* as synonymous; this confusion, however, appears to have arisen from both being attributes of Bacchus, whose hair was not only adorned with clusters from the vine, but like the locks of Apollo (*πλοκμοι βοτρυοεντες*. Apollon. *Αργον.* b. 677) was itself clustering.\* Sir William Jones acutely conjectures that Solomon alluded to the hair in that elliptical speech of the Shulamite, Song i. 14.

אשכל הכפר דודי לי  
בכרמי עין גדי

A cluster of grapes, &c.

The like epithet, though adopted from a different fruit, occurs in the poem of Amriolkais: "Her long coal-black hair decorated her back, thick and diffused, like bunches of dates clustering on the palm-tree." The diffusion of hair here noticed, and its floating as described by our author, are circumstances so frequent in the works of Hafez and Jami, that there is scarce a page of them in which the idea of the breeze playing with the tresses of a beautiful girl is not agreeably and variously expressed.† An instance from Petrarch resembling their manner may be seen in the lines that follow:

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\* Winckelmann hath strangely fixed upon the reverse of this character as an exclusive property of these divinities; and so infallible a criterion does he make it, as even from it alone to ascertain their mutilated statues. *Hist. de l'Art d' Antiq.*, tom. ii. p. 146. However, in another part of his work he refers to Plutarch as cited above.

† Preface to Jones's Poems, p. xii.

Aura, che quelle chiome bionde e cresse  
 Circondi, e movi, e se' mossa da loro  
 Soavemente, e spargi quel dolce oro,  
 E poi'l raccogli, e'n bei nodi'l rincespe.  
*Son. cxc.*

Page 79. *Your ivory limbs.* The Arabians compare the skin of a beautiful woman to the egg of the ostrich when preserved unsullied; \* thus Amriolkais: "Delicate was her shape, fair her skin, and her body well proportioned; her bosom was as smooth as a mirror, or like the pure egg of an ostrich, of a yellowish tint blended with white." Also the Koran: "Near them shall lie the virgins of Paradise, refraining their looks from beholding any besides their spouses, having large black eyes, and resembling the eggs of an ostrich covered with feathers from dust." Moallakat, p. 8; Al Koran, ch. 27. But though the Arabian epithet be taken from thence, yet the word ivory is substituted, as more analogous to European ideas, and not foreign from the eastern; thus Amru: "And two sweet breasts, smooth and white as vessels of ivory, modestly defended from the hand of those who presume to touch them." Moallakat, p. 77.

*Baths of rose-water.* The use of perfumed waters for the purpose of bathing is of an early origin in the East, where every odoriferous plant sheds a richer fragrance than is known to our more humid climates. The rose which yields this lotion is, according to Hasselquist, of a beautiful pale blush colour, double, large as a man's fist, and more exquisite in scent than any other species. The quantities of this water distilled annually at Fajhum, and carried to distant countries, is immense. The mode of conveying it is in vessels of copper,

\* A fair skin is likened by the Italian poets to curd; thus Bracciolini:

I suoi teneri membri un latte sieno  
 Che tremolante, ma non rotto ancora,  
 Pose accorto Pastor su i verdi giunchi.  
*Amoroso Sdegno, iii. 2.*

Likewise Tasso:

egli rivolse  
 I cupidi occhi in quelle membra belle,  
 Che, come suole tremolare, il latte  
 Ne giunchi, si parean morbide, e bianche.  
*Aminta, iii. 1.*

coated with wax. Voyag. p. 248. Ben Jonson makes Volpone say to Celia :

Their bath shall be the juyce of gilliflowers,  
Spirit of roses and of violets.

*Amuse you with tales.* Thus in the story of Alraoui : "There was an emir of Grand Cairo, whose company was no less coveted for his genius than his rank ; being one day in a melancholy mood, he turned towards a courtier and said : 'Alraoui, my heart is dejected and I know not the cause ; relate to me some pleasant story to dispel my chagrin.' Alraoui replied : 'The great have with reason regarded tales as the best antidote to care ; if you will allow me, I will tell you my own.'" Translated from one of the unpublished MSS. mentioned in the preface. "The Arabian Nights," saith Colonel Capper in his observations on the passage to India, through Egypt, and across the Great Desert, "are by many people supposed to be a spurious production, and are therefore slighted in a manner they do not deserve ; they are written by an Arabian, and are universally read and admired throughout Asia by persons of all ranks, both old and young ; considered therefore as an original work, descriptive as they are of the manners and customs of the East in general, and also of the genius and character of the Arabians in particular, they surely must be thought to merit the attention of the curious ; nor are they, in my opinion, entirely destitute of merit in other respects ; for although the extravagance of some of the stories is carried too far, yet on the whole one cannot help admiring the fancy and invention of the author in striking out such a variety of pleasing incidents, pleasing I call them because they have frequently afforded me much amusement ; nor do I envy any man his feelings who is above being pleased with them ; but before any person decides on the merit of these books he should be eye-witness of the effects they produce on those who best understand them. I have more than once seen the Arabians on the desert sitting round a fire, listening to these stories with such attention and pleasure, as totally to forget the fatigue and hardship with which an instant before they were totally overcome ; in short, they are held in the same estimation all over Asia, as the adventures of Don Quixote are in Spain." If the observation of the Knight of La Mancha, respecting translation in general,



be just—"Me parece, que el traducir de una lengua en otra, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el reves, que aunque se ven las figuras, son llenas de hilos que las escurecen, y no se ven con la lisura y tez de la haz"—the wrong side of tapestry will represent more truly the figures on the right, notwithstanding the floss that blurs them, than any version, the precision and smoothness of the Arabian surface. The prospect of a rich country in all the glories of summer is not more different from its November appearance, than the original of those tales, when opposed to the French translation; of which it may be added, our version is at best but a moonlight view:

pallida la luna  
Tingea d'un lume scolorito e incerto  
La vasta solitudine terrena.

*Lamb à la crème.* No dish amongst the Easterns was more generally admired; the Caliph Abdolmelek, at a splendid entertainment to which whoever came was welcome, asked Amrou the son of Hareth what kind of meat he preferred to all others; the old man answered: "An ass's neck, well seasoned and roasted." "But what say you," replied the Caliph, "to the leg or shoulder of a lamb *à la crème*?" and added:

"How sweetly we live if a shadow would last!"

M.S. Laud. Numb. 161. A. Ockley's Hist. of the Saracens, vol. ii. p. 277.

*Made the dwarfs dance against their will.* Ali Chelebi al Moufti, in a treatise on the subject, held that dancing after the example of the Derviches, who made it a part of their devotion, was allowable. But in this opinion he was deemed to be heterodox; for Mahometans in general place dancing amongst the things that are forbidden. Herbelot, p. 98.

*Durst not refuse the Commander of the Faithful.* The mandates of Oriental potentates have ever been accounted irresistible; hence the submission of these devotees to the will of the Caliph. Esther i. 19; Daniel vi. 8; Ludeke, Expos. brevis, p. 60.

*He spread himself on the sofa.* The idiom of the original occurs in Euripides, and is from him adopted by Milton:

Ιδετε τον Γερωντ' α-  
μαλον επι πεδω  
χρμενον' ω ταλας.

*Heraclidæ*, v. 75.

See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,  
With languished head unpropt,  
As one past hope, abandoned,  
And by himself given over.

*Samson*, v. 118.

Page 80. *Properly lubricated with the balm of Mecca.* Unguents, for reasons sufficiently obvious, have been of general use in hot climates. According to Pliny, "at the time of the Trojan war, they consisted of oils perfumed with the odours of flowers, and chiefly of roses;" whence the *ροδοεν ελαιον* of Homer. Hasselquist speaks of oil impregnated with the tuberoses and jessamine; but the unguent here mentioned was preferred to every other. Lady M. W. Montagu, desirous to try its effects, seems to have suffered materially from having improperly applied it.

*If their eye-brows and tresses were in order.* As perfuming and decorating the hair of the Sultanas was an essential duty of their attendants, the translator hath ventured to substitute the term tresses for another more exact to the original. In Don Quixote, indeed, a waiting woman of the duchess mentions the same services with our author, but as performed by persons of her own sex: "Hay en Candaya mugeres que andan de casa en casa á quitar el vello, y á pulir las cejas, y hacer otros menjures tocantes á mugeres, nosotras las dueñas de mi señora por jamas quisimos admitirlas, porque las mas oliscan á tercercas," tom. iv. cap. 40, p. 42. Other offices of the dressing-room and toilet may be seen in Lucian, vol. ii. Amor. 39, p. 441. The Arabians had a preparation of antimony and galls with which they tinged the eye-brows of a beautiful black, and great pains were taken to shape them into regular arches. In combing the hair it was customary to sprinkle it with perfumes, and to dispose it in a variety of becoming forms. Richardson's Dissertat., p. 481; Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters.

*The nine hundred and ninety-ninth time.* The Mahometans boast of a doctor who is reported to have read over the Koran not fewer than twenty thousand times. Herbelot, p. 75.

*Black eunuchs, sabre in hand.* In this manner the apartments of the ladies were constantly guarded. Thus, in the story of the enchanted horse, Firouz Schah, traversing a strange palace by night, entered a room, "and by the light of a lanthorn saw that the persons he had heard snoring were black eunuchs with naked sabres by them, which was enough to inform him that this was the guard chamber of some queen or princess." Arabian Nights, vol. iv. p. 189.

Page 81. *Nouronihar, daughter of the Emir, was sprightly as an antelope, and full of wanton gaiety.* Solomon has compared his bride to "a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots;" Horace, a sportive young female to an untamed filly; Sophocles, a delicate virgin to a wild heifer; Ariosto, Angelica to a fawn or kid; and Tasso, Erminia to a hind; but the object of resemblance adopted by our author is of superior beauty to them all.

*To let down the great swing.* The swing was an exercise much used in the apartments of the eastern ladies, and not only contributed to their health, but amusement. Tales of Inatulla, vol. i. p. 259.

Page 82. *I accept the invitation of thy honied lips.* Uncommon as this idiom may appear in our language, it was not so either to the Hebrew or the Greek. Compare Proverbs xvi. 24—

צִי־דָבֵשׁ אִמְרֵי־נָעִם

with Homer, Iliad A. 249—

Του και απο γλωσσης Μελιτος γλυκιων ρεεν αυδη—

Theocritus, Idyl. xx. 26—

Εκ στοματων δε

Ερῶε μοι φωνα λγυκερωτερα η Μελικηρω—

And Solomon's Song iv. 11—

נֶפֶת תִּטְפֶּנָּה שְׁפָתוֹתֶיךָ כֶּלֶה  
דָּבֵשׁ

with Moschus, Idyl. i. 9—

ἄδν λαλημα·

ὥς μελι, φωνα.

An Arabian fabulist, enumerating the charms of a consummate

beauty, hath used the identical expression of our author, but probably in an extended sense, as

From her lip  
Not words alone pleased him.

*My senses are dazzled with the radiance that beams from thy charms*, or, to express an idiom for which we have no substitute, thy countenance, *rayonnante de beautés et de grâces*. Descriptions of this kind are frequent in Arabian writers ; thus Tarafa : “ Her face appears to be wrapped in a veil of sunbeams.” And in the Arabian Nights : “ Schemselnihar came forward amongst her attendants with a majesty resembling the sun amidst the clouds, which receive his splendour without concealing his lustre.” To account for this compliment in the mouth of Bababalouk, we should remember that he was, *ex officio*, *elegans formarum spectator*.

Page 83. *Melodious Philomel, I am thy rose*. The passion of the nightingale for the rose is celebrated over all the East ; thus Mesihi, as translated by Sir W. Jones :

Come, charming maid, and hear thy poet sing,  
Thyself the rose, and he the bird of spring ;  
Love bids him sing, and love will be obeyed,  
Be gay ; too soon the flowers of spring will fade.

*Oil spilt in breaking the lamps*. It appears from Thevenot that illuminations were usual on the arrival of a stranger, and he mentions on an occasion of this sort two hundred lamps being lighted, the quantity of oil therefore spilt by Bababalouk may be easily accounted for from this custom.

*Reclining on down*. See Lady M. W. Montagu, let. xxvi.

Page 85. *Calenders*. These were a sort of men amongst the Mahometans who abandoned father and mother, wife and children, relations and possessions, to wander through the world under a pretence of religion, entirely subsisting on the fortuitous bounty of those they had the address to dupe. Herbelot, Suppl. p. 204.

*Santons*. A body of religionists who were also called *Abdals*, and pretended to be inspired with the most enthusiastic raptures of divine love ; they were regarded by the vulgar as saints. Olearius, tom. i. p. 971 ; Herbelot, p. 5.

*Dervises.* The term *dervise* signifies a poor man, and is the general appellation by which a religious amongst the Mahometans is named. There are, however, discriminations that distinguish this class from the others already mentioned ; they are bound by no vow of poverty, they abstained not from marriage, and, whenever disposed, they may relinquish both their blue shirt and profession. Herbelot, Suppl. 214. It is observable that these different orders, though not established till the reign of Nasser al Samani, are notwithstanding mentioned by our author as coeval with Vathek, and by the author of the Arabian Nights as existing in the days of Haroun al Raschid ; so that the Arabian fabulists appear as inattentive to chronological exactness in points of this sort as our immortal dramatist himself.

*Brahmins.* These constituted the principal caste of the Indians, according to whose doctrine *Brahma*, from whom they are called, is the first of the three created beings by whom the world was made. This Brahma is said to have communicated to the Indians four books, in which all the sciences and ceremonies of their religion are comprised. The word Brahma in the Indian language signifies pervading all things. The Brahmins lead a life of most rigid abstinence, refraining not only from the use but even the touch of animal food, and are equally exemplary for their contempt of pleasures and devotion to philosophy and religion. Herbelot, p. 212 ; Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph., tom. i. p. 194.

*Fakirs.* This sect were a kind of religious anchorites, who spent their whole lives in the severest austerities and mortification. It is almost impossible for the imagination to form an extravagance that has not been practised by some of them to torment themselves ; as their reputation for sanctity rises in proportion to their sufferings, those amongst them are revered the most who are most ingenious in the invention of tortures, and persevering in enduring them ; hence some have persisted in sitting or standing for years together in one unvaried posture, supporting an almost intolerable burden, dragging the most cumbrous chains, exposing their naked bodies to the scorching sun, and hanging with the head downward before the fiercest fires. Relig. Ceremon. vol. iii. p. 264, &c. ; White's Sermons, p. 504.

*Some that cherished vermin.* In this attachment they were

not singular ; the Emperor Julian not only discovered the same partiality, but celebrated with visible complacency the shaggy and populous beard which he fondly cherished ; and even the historian of the Roman empire affirms “that the little animal is a beast familiar to man, and signifies love.” Vol. ii. p. 343.

*Visnow and Ixhora.* Two deities of the East Indians, concerning whose history and adventures more nonsense is related than can be found in the whole compass of mythology besides ; the traditions of their votaries are no doubt allegorical, but without a key to disclose their mystic import they are little better than senseless jargon.

Page 86. *Talapoins.* This order, which abounds in Siam, Laos, Pegu, and other countries, consists of different classes and both sexes, but chiefly of men. Relig. Ceremon. vol. iv. p. 62, &c.

*Objects of pity were sure to swarm round him.* Ludeke mentions the practice of bringing those who were suffering under any calamity, or had lost the use of their limbs, &c., into public for the purpose of exciting compassion ; on an occasion therefore of this sort, when Fakreddin, like a pious Mussulman, was publicly to distribute his alms, and the Commander of the Faithful to make his appearance, such an assemblage might well be expected. The eastern custom of regaling a convention of this kind is of great antiquity, as is evident from the parable of the king in the Gospels, who entertained the maimed, the lame, and the blind ; nor was it discontinued when Dr. Pococke visited the East. Vol. i. p. 182.

*Horns of an exquisite polish.* Jacinto Polo de Medina, in one of his epigrams, has as unexpected a turn on the same topic :

Cavando un sepulcro un hombre  
Sacò largo, corvo y grueso,  
Entre otros muchos, un hueso,  
Que tiene cuerno por nombre :  
Volviòlo al sepulcro al punto :  
Y viéndolo un cortesa no.  
Dijo : bien haceis, hermano,  
Que es hueso de ese defunto.

*Small plates of abominations.* The Koran hath established several distinctions relative to different kinds of food ; and many Mahometans are so scrupulous as not to touch the flesh



of any animal over which, in the article of death, the butcher had omitted to pronounce the Bismillah. Relig. Cerem., vol. vii. p. 110.

Page 87. *Fish which they drew from a river.* According to Le Bruyn, the Oriental method of fishing with a line is by winding it round the finger, and when the fisherman feels that the bait is taken he draws in the string with alternate hands; in this way, he adds, a good dish of fish is soon caught. Tom. i. p. 564. It appears from a circumstance related by Galand that Vathek was fond of this amusement. Herbelot, Suppl., p. 210.

*Sinai.* This mountain is deemed by Mahometans the noblest of all others, and even regarded with the highest veneration, because the divine law was promulgated from it. Herbelot, p. 812.

*Peries.* The word *peri* in the Persian language signifies that beautiful race of creatures which constitutes the link between angels and men. The Arabians call them *ginn*, or *genii*, and we (from the Persian, perhaps) fairies; at least the peries of the Persian romance correspond to that imaginary class of beings in our poetical system. The Italians denominate them *fata*, in allusion to their power of charming and enchanting; thus the *Manta fatidica* of Virgil is rendered in Orlando *La fata Manto*. The term *ginn* being common to both peries and dives, some have erroneously fancied that the peries were female dives; this appellation, however, served only to discriminate their common nature from the angelic and human, without respect to their qualities, moral or personal; thus the dives are hideous and wicked, whilst the peries are beautiful and good. Amongst the Persian poets the beauty of the peries is proverbial, insomuch that a woman superlatively handsome is styled by them the offspring of a peri.

Page 88. *Butterflies of Cashmere.* The same insects are celebrated in an unpublished poem of Mesihi, another of the MSS. mentioned in the preface. Sir Anthony Shirлие relates that it was customary in Persia "to hawke after butterflies with sparrows made to that use, and stares." It is perhaps to this amusement that our author alludes in the context.

Page 89. *I had rather that his teeth should mischievously*

*press my finger.* These *molles morsiunculæ* remind one of Lesbia and her sparrow :

Passer deliciæ meæ puellæ,  
Quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,  
Quoi primum digitum dare adpetenti,  
Et acres solet incitare morsus.

In the story of the sleeper awakened (which the Induction to the Taming of the Shrew greatly resembles) Abon Hassan thus addresses the lady that was brought him : " Come hither, fair one, and bite the end of my finger,\* that I may feel whether I am asleep or awake." Arab. Nights, vol. iii. p. 137. Lady Percy, with all the fondness of insinuation, practises on her wayward Hotspur a blandishment similar to that here instanced by Nouronihar :

Come, come, you paraquito, answer me  
Directly to this question that I ask,  
In faith I'll break thy little finger, Harry,  
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

Page 90. *Megnoun and Leileh.* These personages are esteemed amongst the Arabians as the most beautiful, chaste, and impassioned of lovers ; and their amours have been celebrated with all the charms of verse in every Oriental language ; the Mahometans regard them and the poetical records of their love in the same light as the Bridegroom and Spouse and the Song of Songs are regarded by the Jews. Herbelot, p. 573.

*They still detained him in the harem.* Nouredin, who was as old as Gulchenrouz, had a similar indulgence of resorting to the harem, and no less availed himself of it. Arab. Nights, vol. iii. pp. 9, 10.

*Dart the lance in the chase.* Throwing the lance was a favourite pastime with the young Arabians ; and so expert were they in this practice (which prepared them for the conflicts both of the chase and of war) that they could bear off a ring on the points of their javelins. Richardson's Dissertat., pp. 198, 281. Though the ancients had various methods of hunting, yet the two which chiefly prevailed were those

\* Ἀλλ' ἐπὶ λεκτρον ἰων, ἀκρον δακτυλον καταδακνω.—Homer. *Batrach.* v. 45.

described by Virgil,\* and alluded to by Solomon,† Prov. vii. 22.

\* Dum trepidant alæ, saltusque indagine cingunt.—*Æn.* iv. 121.

Notwithstanding the explanations of alæ which have been given by Servius, Burman, and others, there can scarce be a doubt but that Virgil referred to the custom of scaring deer into holts, with feathers fastened on lines; a practice so effectual to the purpose, that Linnæus characterised the dama or fallow deer, from it, *arcetur filo horizontali*. The same stratagem is mentioned in the Georgics (iii. 371).

Puniceæve agitant pavidos formidine pinnæ:

and again in the *Æneid* (xii. 749)—

Inclusum veluti si quando flumine nactus

Cervum, aut puniceæ septum formidine pinnæ.

It is observable, however, that the poet, in these instances, hath studiously varied his mode of expression; the sportsmen of Italy used pinion feathers, which, the better to answer their purpose, they dyed of a Lybian red;<sup>1</sup> but as Africa abounded in birds whose wings were impregnated with the spontaneous and glossy tincture of nature, such an expedient in that country must have been needless. If we advert then to the scene of Dido's chase, the reason will be obvious why Virgil omitted puniceæ, and for pinnæ substituted alæ. There is a passage in Nemesianus which will at once confirm the interpretation here given, and illustrate the judgment of the poet in the choice of his terms:

Hinc [sc. ex Africa] mage puniceas nativo munere sumes:

Namque illic sine fine, greges florentibus alis

Invenies avium, suavique rubescere luto.

*Cynegeticon*, v. 317.

† The wide region of conjectural emendation cannot produce a happier instance of critical skill than was discovered by that accurate and judicious scholar, the late Dr Hunt,<sup>2</sup> who, when the sense of the passage referred to

<sup>1</sup> Lybice fucantur sandyce pinnæ.—*Gratii Cyneget.*, v. 86.

<sup>2</sup> The correction with the context is this:

22. He goeth after her straightway,  
As an ox goeth to the slaughter;

23. Or as an hart boundeth into the toils,  
'Til a dart strike through his liver;

24. As a bird hasteth to the snare,  
And knoweth not that it is for his life.

Dr. Jubb well imagined (though he hath ill rendered הַטָּתוֹ in the 21st verse, *Irretivit illum*) that the heedless haste of the bird towards the snare

*Nor curb the steeds.* Though Gulchenrouz was too young to excel in horsemanship, it nevertheless was an essential accomplishment amongst the Arabians; hence the boast of Amriolkais: "Often have I risen at early dawn, while the birds were yet in their nest, and mounted a hunter with smooth short hair, of a full height, and so fleet as to make captive the beasts of the forest; ready in turning, quick in pursuing, bold in advancing, firm in backing, and performing the whole with the strength and swiftness of a vast rock which a torrent has pushed from its lofty base; a bright bay steed from whose polished back the trappings slide, as drops of rain slide hastily down the slippery marble. . . . He makes the light youth slide from his seat,

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had for ages been lost, sagaciously restored it by curtailing a letter. Proverbs vii. 22. As an hart (לַיִל for לַיִן) boundeth into the toils, till a dart strike through his liver. When the game driven together were either circumvented, as described by Virgil, or ensnared by the foot (ποδοστραβη), as alluded to by Solomon, the hunters despatched them with their missile weapons. Thus Xenophon (as cited in Dr. Hunt's Dissertation) Χρη δ' εαν ουτως ελη—εαν μιν η αρρήν μη προσιεναι εγλυς' τοις γαρ κερασι παιει, και τοις ποσιν' αποθεν ουν ακοντίζειν. When the animal is thus caught, you must not, if it be a male, advance within his reach, for they are apt to strike with their horns and their heels; it will be proper therefore to pierce him at a distance.

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might be caused by the lure of a female's call, and adduced from Oppian an apposite example:

Ὡς δὲ τις οἰωνοῖσι μορον δολοεντα φυτευων  
 Θηλειαν θάμνοισι κατακρυπτει λασιόισιν  
 Ὀρνιν, ὁμογλωσσοιο συνεμπορον ἠθαδα θήρης·  
 Ἢ δὲ λιγα κλαζει ξουθον μελος οἱ δ' αἰοντες  
 Παντες ἐπισκερχουσι, και ἐς βροκον αὐτον ἱεντας  
 Θηλυτερης ἐνοπησι παραπλαλχθεντες ἰωης.

*Halieut.* iv. 120.

As when the fowler to the fields resorts,  
 His caged domestic partner of his sports  
 Behind some shade-projecting bush he lays,  
 And wreaths the wiry cell with blooming sprays,  
 The pretty captive to the groves around  
 Warbles her practised care-deluding sound.  
 The attentive flocks pursue with ravished ear  
 The female music of the feathered fair,  
 Forget to see, and rush upon the snare.

*Jones.*

and violently shakes the skirts of a heavier and more stubborn rider." Moallakat, p. 10. The stud of Fakreddin consisted no doubt of as noble a breed, though sprung neither from "the mighty Tartar horse" (whose gigantic rider was slain by Codadad), nor the sire of Clavileno "and the wondrous horse of brass." Milton's allusion to the last having occasioned much fruitless inquiry concerning his pedigree,\* it shall here be made out, with that of his brother.

The principal qualities of "the horse of brass," were—that he was brought before the Tartar King after the third course of a feast, which was solemnised at the commencement of spring; that he was able within the compass of a natural day to carry his rider wherever he might choose; that he could mount into the air as high as an eagle, and with as equable and easy a motion; that by turning one pin fixed in his ear his course might be directed to a destined spot, and by means of another he might be made to alight, or return to the place from whence he set out.

The particulars of Clavileño are—that he was the production of an enchanter; was capable of rising into the air with the velocity of an arrow, and carrying his rider to any distance; was put into motion by the turning of a pin on his neck, and directed in his course by another in his forehead; that he fled so steadily through the air as not to spill a drop from a cup full of water in the hand of his rider; that, being lent by his owner, Pierres made a long voyage upon him, and brought off the fair Magalona, who alighted to become a queen; that Don Quixote, when high in the air, knew not the management of the pin to prevent his rising; and that he at last vanished amidst rockets and crackers.

\* "Among the MSS. at Oriel College in Oxford is an old Latin treatise entitled 'Fabula de æneo caballo.' Here I imagined I had discovered the origin of Chaucer's 'Squier's Tale,' so replete with marvellous imagery, and evidently an Arabian fiction of the middle ages; but I was disappointed, for on examination, it appeared to have not even a distant connection with Chaucer's story. I mention this that others, on seeing such a title in the catalogue, might not be flattered with specious expectations of so curious a discovery, and misled like myself by a fruitless inquiry."—Warton's edit. of *Milton's Poems*, p. 82.

The resemblances here specified are evidently too strong to have resulted from accident; and it will appear on further inquiry that "the enchanted horse," in the Arabian Nights, was not only possessed of those qualities which were common to them both, but also of such as were peculiar to each. Thus he was presented to the King of Persia at the close of a festival which was celebrated on the opening of spring; could transport his rider, and in the space of a day, whenever he listed; moved so smoothly as to cause no shock, even on his coming to the ground; could soar beyond the ken of every beholder; might be guided by turning a pin in the hollow of his neck to any point his rider should choose; and by means of another behind his right ear he made to descend, or return whence he came; was the production of an enchanter; passed through the air with the speed of an arrow; having been lent by his owner to Firouz Schah, carried him a considerable distance, and brought back behind him the princess of Bengal, to whom the prince was afterwards married; that Firouz Schah, when high in the air, was unable to manage the pin so as to prevent him from rising; and finally, that he made his last exit in an explosion of fireworks and smoke.\*

*The bow, however, he drew with a certain aim.* This, as well as the other accomplishments mentioned before, was a constituent part of an eastern education; thus in the story of the sisters who envied their sister: "When the princes were learning to mount the managed horse and to ride, the princess could not permit them to have that advantage over her, but went through all their exercises with them, learning to ride the great horse, dart the javelin, and bend the bow." Arab. Nights, vol. iv. p. 276.

Page 91. *The two brothers had mutually engaged their children to each other.* Contracts of this nature were frequent amongst the Arabians; another instance occurs in the story of Nouredin Ali and Benreddin Hassan.

*Nouronihar loved her cousin even more than her eyes.* This

\* It may not be impertinent to subjoin, on a kindred subject, as no mention has been hitherto made of him, that the author of "The Touchstone, or paradoxes brought to the test of a rigorous and fair examination, printed for Noon, 1732," appears to have been the original projector of sailing through the air in a boat appended to a ball.



mode of expression not only occurs in the sacred writers, but also in the Greek and Roman ; thus, Moschus :

Τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ τρεσκὸν ἴσον φαέεσσιν ἐμοῖσιν—

and Catullus :

Quem plus illa oculis suis amabat.

*The same long, languishing looks.* So Ariosto :

Negri occhi,

Pietosi a riguardare, a mover parchi.

The lines which follow, from Shakespeare and Spenser, may serve as a comment upon the brief but beautiful description of our author.

Never gazed the moon  
Upon the water, as he'll stand, and read,  
As 'twere, my daughter's eyes.

*Winter's Tale.*

Her eyes sweet smiling in delight,  
Moystened their fierie beames, with which she thrield  
Fraile hearts, yet quenched not ; like starry light,  
Which sparkling on the silent waves does seeme more bright.

*Faerie Queen.\**

*With all the bashfulness of a fawn.* The fawn, as better known, is here substituted for the gazelle of the Arabians, an animal uncommonly beautiful and shy.

*Take refuge in the arms of Nouronihar.* Ample scope is here left to the imagination of the reader, and Tasso will assist him to fill up the picture.

Sovra lui pende : ed ei nel grembo molle  
Le posa il capo, e'l volto al volto attolle.

*La Gerus. xvi. 18.*

*Shâdukiam and Ambreabad.* These were two cities of the peries in the imaginary region of Ginnistan ; the former signifies pleasure and desire, the latter the city of Ambergris. See Richardson's Dissertat. p. 169.

*Young girls drawing cool water from the streams below.* The office of fetching water in the East belongs to women, and par-

\* Spenser seems to have copied this simile from Tasso :

Qual raggio in onda, le scintilla un rise  
Negli umidi occhi tremulo e lascivo.

ticularly to "young women that are single." The cool of the evening was the season to procure a supply for the morrow; this custom is of great antiquity; an instance of it occurs in the writings of Moses, and in Homer not unfrequently. Shaw's Travels, p. 241; Chardin's MS. (cited by Harmer) Gen. xxiv. 15-45; Odyss. xx. 154, x. 105, vii. 20.

Page 94. *A spoon of Cocknos.* The cocknos is a bird whose beak is much esteemed for its beautiful polish, and sometimes used as a spoon; thus, in the History of Atalmulck and Zelica Begum, it was employed for a similar purpose: "Zelica having called for refreshment, six old slaves instantly brought in and distributed Mahramas; and then served about in a great basin of martabam a salad made of herbs of various kinds, citron juice, and the pith of cucumbers; they served it first to the princess in a cocknos' beak; she took a beak of the salad, ate it, and gave another to the next slave that sat by her on her right hand, which slave did as her mistress had done."

Page 95. *Goules.* Goul or *ghul*, in Arabic, signifies any terrifying object which deprives people of the use of their senses; hence it became the appellative of that species of monster which was supposed to haunt forests, cemeteries, and other lonely places, and believed not only to tear in pieces the living, but to dig up and devour the dead. Richardson's Dissert. pp. 174-274. That kind of insanity called by the Arabians *kutrub* (a word signifying not only a wolf, but likewise a male goul), which incites such as are afflicted with it to roam howling amidst those melancholy haunts, may cast some light on the nature of the possession recorded by St. Mark, chap. v. 1, &c.

Page 96. *Feathers of the heron, sparkling with carbuncles.* Panaches of this kind are amongst the attributes of eastern royalty. Tales of Inatulla, vol. ii. p. 205.

Page 67. *Whose eyes pervade the inmost soul of a female.* The original in this instance, as in the others already noticed, is more analogous to the French than the English idiom: *Dont l'oeil pénètre jusqu'à la moelle des jeunes filles.*

*The carbuncle of Giamschid.* This mighty potentate was the fourth sovereign of the dynasty of the Pischadians, and brother

or nephew to Tahamurath ; his proper name was *Giam* or *Gem*, and *Schid*, which in the language of the ancient Persians denominated the sun, an addition ascribed by some to the majesty of his person, and by others to the splendour of his actions. One of the most magnificent monuments of his reign was the city of Istakhar, of which Tahamurath had laid the foundations. This city, at present called *Gihil*-, or *Tchil-minar*, from the forty columns reared in it by Homai, or (according to our author and others \*) Soliman Ben Daoud, was known to the Greeks by the name of Persepolis ; and there is still extant in the East a tradition that when Alexander burnt the edifices of the Persian kings, seven stupendous structures of Giamschid were consumed with his palace. This prince, after having subjected to his empire seven vast provinces of Upper Asia, and enjoyed in peace a long reign (which some authors have protracted to seven hundred years), became intoxicated with his greatness, and, foolishly fancying it would have no end, arrogated to himself divine honours ; but the Almighty raised up, even in his own house, a terrible instrument to abase his pride, by whom he was easily overcome and driven into exile. The author of *Giame al Tavatikh* mentions the cup or concave mirror of Giamschid, formed of a gem, and called the cup of the sun ; to this vessel the Persian poets often refer, and allegorise it in different ways ; they attribute to it the property of exhibiting everything in the compass of nature, and even some things that are preternatural ; the gem it consisted of appears to be the carbuncle or oriental ruby, which, from its resemblance to a burning coal and the splendour it was supposed to emit in the dark, was called *schebgerag*, or the torch of the night ; according to Strabo it obtained its high estimation amongst the Persians, who were worshippers of fire, from its igneous qualities, and perhaps those virtues for which it hath been styled "the first of stones." Milton had a learned retrospect to its fabulous powers in describing the Old Serpent :

His head  
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes.

Herbelot, pp. 392, 395, 780, &c. ; Brighte on Melancholie, p. 321 ; Paradise Lost, ix. 499.

\* Examen Critique des Anciens Historiens d'Alexandre le Grand, p. 287.

*The torches were extinguished.* From the emblems of royalty in the vision, and the closing declaration of the last voice, it is evident that these torches, λαμπαδας αντι των νυμφικων του δαιμονος αψαντος, were lighted by the dive, to prognosticate \* the destined union, of which the water in the bath was a further omen. Thus Lactantius : "A veteribus institutum est, ut sacramento ignis et aquæ nuptiarum fœdera sanciantur, quod fœtus animantium calore et humore corporentur atque animentur ad vitam. Unde aqua et igne uxorem accipere dicitur." Ovid. Fast. iv. 792 ; Var. de. ling. Lat. iv. 10 ; Serv. ad Virg. Æn. iv. 167. Of the union here prefigured the sequel will allow to be added :

Non Hymenæus adest illi, non gratia lecto ;  
Eumenides tenuere faces, de funere raptas :  
Eumenides stravere torum.

*She clapped her hands.* This was the ordinary method in the East of calling the attendants in waiting. See Arabian Nights, vol. i. pp. 5, 106, 193, &c.

Page 98. *Whence got you false keys ? come to your chamber ! I will shut you up in the double tower.* It was the office of Shaban as chief eunuch to keep the key of the ladies' apartment. In the story of Ganem, Haroun al Raschid commands Mesrour, the chief of the eunuchs, "to take the perfidious Fetnah, and shut her up in the dark tower." That tower was within the enclosure of the palace, and commonly served as a prison for the favourites who might chance to disgust the Caliph.

Page 99. *Set him upon his shoulders.* The same mode of carrying boys is noted by Sandys ; and Ludeke has a passage still more to the purpose : "Liberos dominorum suorum grandiusculos ita humeris portant servi, ut illi lacertis suis horum collum, pedibus vero latera amplectantur, sicque illorum facies super horum caput emineat." Expositio Brevis, p. 37.

*His cheeks became the colour of the blossom of the pomegranate.* The modest blush of an ingenuous youth (which a Grecian lady of admired taste averred to be the finest colour in nature) is denominated by the Arabians from this very flower.

\* Mihi deductæ fax omen prætulit.  
*Propert.* IV. iii. 13.

Solomon, in his exquisite Idyllium, hath adopted the same comparison, ch. iv. v. 3 ; כַּפְלַח הַרְמוֹן רֶקֶתֶךָ Thy cheeks are like the opening bloom\* of the pomegranate. But a more apposite use of this similitude occurs in an ode by a poet of Damascus : "The blossom of the pomegranate brings back to my mind the blushes of my beloved, when her cheeks are coloured with a modest resentment."

Page 100. *As her hands evince.* When females in the East are betrothed, their palms and fingers are tinged of a crimson colour with the herb hinnah. This is called the crimson of consent. *Tales of Inatulla*, vol. ii. p. 15.

*Violate the rites of hospitality.* So high an idea of these rites prevails amongst the Arabians, that a bread and salt traitor is the most opprobrious invective with which one person can reproach another. Richardson's *Dissert.*, p. 219 ; see also the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, in the *Arabian Nights*, vol. iv. p. 166.

Page 101. *Narcotic powder.* A drug of the same quality mixed in lemonade is given to Zobeide, in the story of Ganem.

Page 103. *Funeral vestments were prepared, their bodies washed, &c.* The rites here practised had obtained from the earliest ages ; most of them may be found in Homer and the other poets of Greece. Lucian describes the dead in his time

\* Simon interprets פֶּלַח by *eruptio floris*, and Guarini by *balaustium* ; senses, which the following passage from Pliny will support : "Primus pomi hujus partus flore incipientis, Cytinus vocatur Græcis—. In hoc ipso cytino flosculi sunt, antequam scilicet malum ipsum prodeat, erumpentes, quos balaustium vocari diximus." *Nat. Hist.* lib. xxiii. 59, 60. According to Dioscorides, i. 132, the *balaustium* was the blossom of the wild, and the cytinus of the cultivated pomegranate. Dr. Durell, justly dissatisfied with the versions before him, hath rendered the hemistich thus : Thy cheeks are like a piece of pomegranate—and adds : "The cheeks are compared to a piece of this fruit, because the pomegranate when whole is of a dull colour, but when cut up of a lively beautiful vermillion." But if this interpretation and reasoning be allowed, Solomon was less pat at a simile than Sancho ; for whether the cheeks of a blooming bride—or the inwards of a man, "just cleft from noddle down to noddle"—be more like a split pomegranate ? "let the forest judge." Durell's *Critical Remarks*, p. 293 ; *Don Quixote*, tom. iii. p. 282.

as washed, perfumed, vested, and crowned, ἀραιὸς ἀνθεσίν, with the flowers most in season ; or, according to other writers, those in particular which the deceased were wont to prefer. The elegant editor of the Ruins of Palmyra mentions the fragments of a mummy found there, the hair of which was plaited exactly in the manner as worn at present by the women of Arabia. The burial dress from the days of Homer hath been commonly white, and amongst Mahometans is made without a seam, that it may not impede the ceremonial of kneeling in the grave when the dead person undergoes examination. Homer, Euripides, &c., passim ; Lucian, tom. ii. p. 927 ; Paschal de Coron. p. 225 ; Ruins of Palmyra, pp. 22, 23 ; Iliad . 352 ; Relig. Cerem. vol. vii. p. 117.

Page 104. *All instruments of music were broken.* Thus in the Arabian Nights : “ Haroun al Raschid wept over Schemselnihar, and before he left the room ordered all the musical instruments to be broken.” Vol. ii. p. 196.

*Imans began to recite their prayers.* An Iman is the principal priest of a mosque. It was the office of the Imans to precede the bier, praying as the procession moved on. Relig. Cerem. vol. vii. p. 117.

*The wilful cries of La Ilah illa Alla!* This exclamation, which contains the leading principle of Mahometan belief, and signifies there is no God but God, was commonly uttered under some violent emotion of mind. The Spaniards adopted it from their Moorish neighbours, and Cervantes hath used it in Don Quixote : “ En esto llegaron corriendo con grita, lililies [literally professions of faith in Alla] y algazara los de las libreas, abonde Don Quixote suspenso y atónito estava.” Parte Segunda, cap. lxi. tom. iv. p. 241. The same expression is sometimes written by the Spaniards *Lilaila*, and *Hilahaila*.

Page 106. *The Angel of Death had opened the portal of some other world.* The name of this exterminating angel is Azrael, and his office is to conduct the dead to the abode assigned them, which is said by some to be near the place of their interment. Sale’s Prelim. Disc. p. 101 ; Hyde in notis ad Bobov. p. 19 ; R. Elias, in Tishbi ; Buxtorf Synag. Jud. et Lexic. Talmud.



*Monker and Nakir.* These are two black angels of a tremendous appearance, who examine the departed on the subject of his faith; by whom if he give not a satisfactory account, he is sure to be cudgelled with maces of red-hot iron, and tormented more variously than words can describe. Relig. Cerem. vol. vii. pp. 59, 68, 118; vol. v. p. 290; Sale's Prelim. Disc. p. 101, and one of the MSS. specified in the preface.

Page 107. *The fatal bridge.* This bridge, called in Arabic *al Sirat*, and said to extend over the infernal gulf, is represented as narrower than a spider's web, and sharper than the edge of a sword. Though the attempt to cross it be

More full of peril, and advent'rous spirit,  
Than to o'erwalk a current, roaring loud,  
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear;

yet the paradise of Mahomet can be entered by no other avenue; those indeed who have behaved well need not be alarmed, mixed characters will find it difficult, but the wicked soon miss their standing and plunge headlong into the abyss. Pococke, in Port. Mos. p. 282, &c. Milton apparently copied from this well-known fiction, and not, as Dr. Warton conjectured, from the poet Sadi, his way

Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf  
Tamely endured a bridge of wond'rous length,  
From hell continued, reaching the utmost orb  
Of this frail world.

*A certain series of years.* According to the tradition from the Prophet, not less than nine hundred, nor more than seven thousand.

*The sacred camel.* It was an article of the Mahometan creed that all animals would be raised again, and some of them admitted into paradise; the animal here mentioned appears to have been one of those white-winged camels,\* caparisoned with gold, which Ali affirmed would be provided to convey the faithful. Relig. Cer. vol. vii. p. 70; Sale's Prelim. Disc. p. 112; Al Jauheri. Ebno'l Athir, &c.

\* Tarafa, amongst other circumstances in the description of his camel, notices her "bushy tail, which appears as if the two wings of a large white eagle were transfix'd by an awl to the bone, and hung waving round both her sides." Moallakat, p. 19.

Page 108. *Panniers*. This sort of basket-work hath been long used in the East, and consists of the leaves of the date-bearing palm. Panniers of this texture are of great utility in conveying fruits, bread, &c., whilst heavier articles, or such as require a more compact covering, are carried in bags of leather or skin. Hasselquist's Voyage, p. 261.

Page 109. *The Caliph presented himself to the Emir in a new light*. The propensity of a vicious person, in affliction, to seek consolation from the ceremonies of religion is an exquisite trait in the character of Vathek.

Page 115. *The waving of fans*. These fans consisted of the trains of peacocks or ostriches, whose quills were set in a long stem so as to imbricate the plumes in the gradations of their natural growth. Fans of this fashion were formerly used in England. To judge from the language of Burton—"If he get any remnant of hers, a buske-point, a feather of her fanne, a shoo-tye, a lace"—these fans soon after became common. It was, however, to this kind that Milton alluded in a passage of *Paradise Lost*, the collocation of which, though disjointed through the mistake of his amanuensis, may by transposing a word be restored :

His sleep  
Was aery light, from pure digestion bred,  
And temperate vapours bland, which th' only sound  
Of fuming rills and leaves, Aurora's fan,  
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song  
Of birds on ev'ry bough.

Trees whose branches are well covered with leaves may be not improperly styled feathering ;\* and in the language of Milton form the fan of Aurora, which, when waved by the breeze of the morning, occasions the rustling that constitutes a third in the complex sound referred to.

*Wine hoarded up in bottles prior to the birth of Mahomet*. The prohibition of wine by the prophet materially diminished its consumption within the limits of his own dominions ; hence a reserve of it might be expected of the age here specified. The custom of hoarding wine was not unknown to the Persians, though not so often practised by them as by the Greeks and the

\* Thus Mr. Whateley, the first authority in the language of picturesque description : "Large boughs feathering down often intercept the sight."

Romans. "I purchase," says Lebeid, "the old liquor at a dear rate, in dark leathern bottles long reposit, or in casks black with pitch, whose seals I break, and then fill the cheerful goblet." Moallakat, p. 53.

*Excavated ovens in the rock.* As substitutes for the portable ovens which were lost.

*Manchets prepared by Nouronihar.* Herodotus mentions a lady of equal rank performing a similar office—*ἡ δὲ γυνὴ τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτὴ τὰ σῖτια σφί επεσσε*; \* and the cakes which Tamar made for Amnon are well known.

Page 117. *Whirled herself round in a magical manner.* The Arabic verb (which corresponds to the Hebrew סָחַר and שָׁחַר) is interpreted by Willmet *scindere s. secare in orbem: inde notio circandi, mox gyrandi, et hinc a motu versatili Fascinavit, incantavit.* An inflexion of the same verb is beautifully applied in the Koran, and by Hariri to the fascinating power of eloquence.

*Her great camel Alboufaki.* There is a singular and laboured description of a camel in the poem of Tarafa, but Alboufaki possessed qualities appropriate to himself, and which rendered him but little less conspicuous than the deformed dun camel of Aad.

Page 118. *To set forward, notwithstanding it was noon.* The employment of wood-fellers was accounted of all others the most toilsome, as those occupied in it were compelled to forego that midday cessation with which other labourers were indulged. Inatulla speaks proverbially of "woodmen in the meridian hour, scarce able to raise the arms of languor." The guides of Carathis being of this occupation, she adroitly availed herself of it to urge them forward, without allowing them that repose during the mid-day fervour which travellers in these climates always enjoyed,† and which was deemed so essential to the preservation of their health.

\* Lib. viii. p. 685. That *σῖτια* is to be understood in the sense above given is certain from what immediately follows.

† Psalm xci. 5. The explanatory iteration of the subsequent verse points out a congruity between the Hebrew poet and Homer. As the contagion amongst the Greeks produced by the excessive heat of the sun was assigned in the Iliad to the arrows of the God of light, so the destruc-

Page 119. *The confines of some cemetery.* Places of interment in the East were commonly situated in scenes of solitude; we read of one in the History of the First Calender, abounding with so many monuments, that four days were successively spent in it without the inquirer being able to find the tomb he looked for; and from the story of Ganem it appears that the doors of these cemeteries were often left open. Arab. Nights, vol. i. p. 112; vol. iii. p. 135.

Page 122. *A Myrabolan comfit.* The invention of this confection is attributed by M. Cardonne to Avicenna, but there is abundant reason, exclusive of our author's authority, to suppose it of a much earlier origin; both the Latins and Greeks were acquainted with the balsam, and the tree that produced it was indigenous in various parts of Arabia.

Page 124. *Blue fishes.* Fishes of the same colour are mentioned in the Arabian Nights, and, like these, were endowed with the gift of speech.

Page 126. *Nests still higher than the clouds.* The metaphor of a nest for a secure habitation occurs in the sacred writings; thus Habakkuk: "Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil;" and Obadiah: "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars," &c. The genius here mentioned seems to have been adopted from the Jewish notion of guardian angels, to whom the superintendence of children is supposed to be committed, and to which our Saviour himself hath referred (Matt. xviii. 10); whilst the original possessors of the nest may be presumed to have been some of those marvellous birds so frequently mentioned in Eastern romance.

*Waving streamers on which were inscribed the names of Alla and the Prophet.* The position that "there is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet," pervades every part of

tion that wasteth at noon is attributed in the psalm to the arrow that flieth by day. It has been observed by a nobleman of many accomplishments, that this verse should be added to the other passages of Scripture which have been noted in the writings ascribed to Zoroaster.

the Mahometan religion. Banners, like those here described, are preserved in the several mosques, and on the death of extraordinary persons are borne before the bier in solemn state. Relig. Cerem. vol. vii. p. 119, 120.

Page 127. *Astrolabes*. The mention of the Astrolabe may be deemed incompatible at first view with chronological exactness, as there is no instance of any being constructed by a Mussulman till after the time of Vathek. It may, however, be remarked, to go no higher, that Sinesius, bishop of Ptolemais, invented one in the fifth century; and that Carathis was not only herself a Greek, but also cultivated those sciences which the good Mussulmans of her time all held in abhorrence. Bailly, Hist. de l'Astronom. Moderne, tom. i. p. 563, 573.

Page 129. *On the banks of the stream hives and oratories*. The bee is an insect held in high veneration amongst the Mahometans, it being pointed out in the Koran "for a sign unto the people that understand;" the Santons therefore who inhabit the fertile banks of Rocnabad are not less famous for their hives than their oratories. Herbelot, p. 717.

*Harbingers of the Imperial procession began to proclaim*. This circumstance of sending heralds to announce the approach of a sovereign reminds us of "the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

Page 131. *Sheiks, Cadis*. Sheiks are the chiefs of the societies of Dervishes; Cadis are the magistrates of a town or city.

*Asses in bridles of riband inscribed from the Koran*. As the judges of Israel in ancient days rode on white asses, so amongst the Mahometans, those that affect an extraordinary sanctity use the same animal in preference to the horse. Sir John Chardin observed in various parts of the East that their reins, as here represented, were of silk, with the name of God, or other inscriptions upon them. Ludeke Expos. brevis, p. 49; Chardin's MS., cited by Harmer.

Page 133. *One of these beneficent genii, assuming the exterior of a shepherd, &c., began to pour from his flute, &c.* The flute was considered as a sacred instrument, which Jacob and other

holy shepherds had sanctified by using. Religious Cerem. vol. vii. p. 110.

*Involuntarily drawn towards the declivity of the hill.* A similar instance of attraction may be seen in the story of Prince Ahmed and the Peri Paribanon. Arabian Nights, vol. iv. p. 243.

Page 134. *Eblis*. Herbelot supposes this title to have been a corruption of Διαβόλος. It was the appellation conferred by the Arabians upon the Prince of the Apostate Angels, whom they represent as exiled to the infernal regions for refusing to worship Adam, at the command of the Supreme.

*Compensate for thy impieties by an exemplary life.* It is an established article of the Mussulman creed, that the actions of mankind are all weighed in a vast unerring balance, and the future condition of the agents determined according to the preponderance of evil or good. This fiction, which seems to have been borrowed from the Jews, had probably its origin in the figurative language of Scripture; thus Psalm lxii. 9. "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." And in Daniel, the sentence against the king of Babylon inscribed on the wall: "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting."

Page 136. *Balkis*. This was the Arabian name of the Queen of Sheba, who went from the south to hear the wisdom and admire the glory of Solomon; the Koran represents her as a worshipper of fire. Solomon is said not only to have entertained her with the greatest magnificence, but also to have raised her to his bed and his throne. Al Koran, ch. xxvii. and Sale's Notes; Herbelot, p. 182.

Page 137. *Of an architecture unknown in the records of the earth—an immense palace, whose walls were embossed with various figures, &c.* Thus Pellegrino Gaudenzi, in his description of the palace of sin:

Enorme pondo al suolo, immensa mole  
D' aspri macigni intesta e negri marmi  
Per cui serpeggian di sanguigna tinta  
Lugubri vene: l'atterito sguardo



Muto s'erresta sull' altera fronte  
 Ch' entro le nubi si sospinge, e s' alza  
 Superbamente a minacciar le stelle.  
 Sotto grand' archi su marmoree basi  
 Fan di sè mostra simulacri orrendi  
 Che in faccia ad essa i Demon fabbrì alzarò.

*La Nascita di Cristo, c. i.*

*The chief of the eunuchs, trembling with fear, besought Vathek that a fire might be kindled.* Ητορ παχρυνται, the very heart of Bababalouk is congealed with apprehension. Where can a more exquisite trait, both of nature and character, be found than this request of the eunuch presents?

Page 138. *They seemed not walking, but falling.* A similar kind of progression is described by Milton :

By the hand he took me raised ;  
 And over fields and waters, as in air,  
 Smooth sliding without step last led me.

Page 139. *The pavement strewed over with saffron.* There are several circumstances in the story of the Third Calender that resemble those here mentioned, particularly a pavement strewed with saffron, and the burning of ambergris and aloes wood.

*A throng of genii and other fantastic spirits danced, &c.* A dance of the same kind, and by similar performers, occurs in the History of Ahmed and the Peri Paribanon.

Page 140. *Let us haste and present you to Eblis.* If our author's description of the Arch-Apostate be examined by the criterion of Arabian faith, and in reference to the circumstances of the story, there can be no difficulty in appreciating its merits ; Gaudenzi, in the poem already cited, hath described the appearance of Satan previous to the birth of Christ, in a manner that deserves to be noticed, though the poem itself were less scarce :

Fra questo orror da sue radici scosso  
 Trema repente il suolo, e all' Oriente  
 Ardua montagna con rimbombo estremo  
 S'apre per mezzo : immensa foce oscura  
 Mugghia dal fondo, e fumo, e fiamme, e lampi  
 Sboccano a un tratto ; i sfracellati massi

Rotando ardenti nel sulfureo flutto  
 Stampan la spiaggia di profonda traccia.  
 Dai neri gorgi del dolente regno  
 Con furibondo orribile muggito  
 Rimonta per l'aperta ampia vorago  
 L'Angiol d'abisso a funestar la terra.  
 Come dell' ocean sola tiranna  
 Sconcia Balena per gli ondosi campi  
 Move animosa, e coll' enorme petto  
 L'ampia spezzando rimugghiante massa  
 Alzasi al giorno, e nel turbato fondo  
 Il muto armento di sua mole adombra ;  
 Tale Satan per vasto mar di fiamme  
 Ergesi a nuoto ; immense ali protese  
 Alto flagellan con sonoro scroscio  
 L'onda infernal, che in rossegianti righe  
 Sbalza stridente, e il ciel veste di foco.  
 Sotto grand' archi di vellute, ciglia,  
 Quasi comete sanguinose erranti  
 Per tenebrose vie, di rabbia pregni  
 Volvonsi gli occhi, e in cavernoso speco  
 Orrida s'apre l'infiammata bocca  
 Aure spirante di veleno infette.\*  
 Egli s'avanza, e il suol guatando e il cielo.  
 Impaziente con le negre braccia  
 Le rupi affera, e d'un immenso slancio  
 Balza al confin della frapposta arena.  
 Mille del suo furor seguaci Spirti  
 Ch' erangli sotto per gl' igniti gorgi  
 Sfilangi dietro, e coll' intento sguardo  
 In lui rivolti gli si fanno al fianco.  
 In sua possanza alteramente fiera  
 Stassi l'oste d' Averno, e adombra il piano,  
 Siccome mille e mille annose quercie  
 Che a' piè d'un' alta ferruginea rupe

---

\* Several expressions in this passage appear to have been imitated from the following of Tasso :

Orrida maestà nel fero aspetto  
 Terrore accresce, e più superbo il rende :  
 Rossegian gli occhj, e di veneno infetto,  
 Come infausta cometa, il guardo splende :  
 Gl' involve il mento, e su l'irsuto petto  
 Ispida e folta la gran barba scende :  
 F. in guisa di voragine profonda,  
 S'apre la bocca d'atro sangue immonda.

Aride e negre al cielo ergon le teste.  
 S'addopian l'ombre della notte, e sola  
 Al folgorar degl' infernali sguardi  
 Arde da lungi la solinga spiaggia,  
 Come spezzata da funeste vampe  
 Massa di nembi.

*Ouranabad.* This monster is represented as a fierce flying hydra, and belongs to the same class with the *Rakshe*, whose ordinary food was serpents and dragons, the *Soham*, which had the head of a horse with four eyes, and the body of a flame-coloured dragon, the *Syl*, a basilisk with a face resembling the human, but so tremendous that no mortal could bear to behold it, the *Ejder*, and others. See these respective titles in Richardson's Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English.

Page 141. *She expected to have seen some stupendous giant.* Such is the representation which Dante hath given of this infernal sovereign :

Lo 'mperador del doloroso regno  
 Da mezzo 'l petto uscia fuor della ghiaccia :  
 E più con un gigante i' mi convegno,  
 Che i giganti non fan con le sue braccia,

It is more than probable (though it has not been noticed) that Don Quixote's mistake of the windmills for giants was suggested to Cervantes by the following simile, in which the tremendous personage above-mentioned is so compared :

Però dinanzi mira,  
 Disse 'l maestro mio, se tu 'l discerni,  
 Come quando una grossa nebbia spira,  
 O quando l' emisferio nostro annotta  
 Par da lungi un mulin che 'l vento gira,  
 Veder mi parve un tal dificio allotta.

What confirms this conjecture is the reply to Sancho's question, "What giants?" made by Don Quixote, in reference to the two last lines of the preceding citation :

"And nearer to a giant's is my size  
 Than giants are when to his arms compared."

"Those thou seest yonder, with their vast arms, and some of hem there are that reach nearly two leagues." Don Quixote,

parte prim. capit. viii. p. 52 ; Dante dell' Inferno, cant. xxxiv. It may be added that a rising wind is mentioned in both.

*Creatures of clay.* Nothing could have been more appositely imagined than this compellation. Eblis had suffered a degradation from his primeval rank, and was consigned to these regions for having refused to worship Adam, in obedience to the supreme command ; alleging in justification of his refusal, that himself had been formed of ethereal fire, whilst Adam was only a creature of clay. Al Koran, c. 55, &c.

Page 142. *The fortress of Aherman.* In the mythology of the Easterns, Aherman was accounted the Demon of Discord. The ancient Persian romances abound in descriptions of this fortress, in which the inferior demons assemble to receive the behests of their Prince, and from whom they proceed to exercise their malice in every part of the world. Herbelot, p. 71.

*The halls of Argenk.* The halls of this mighty dive, who reigned in the mountains of Kaf, contained the statues of the seventy-two Solimans, and the portraits of the various creatures subject to them, not one of which bore the slightest similitude to man ; some had many heads, others many arms, and some consisted of many bodies ; their heads were all very extraordinary, some resembling the elephant's, the buffalo's, and the boar's, whilst others were still more monstrous. Herbelot, p. 820. Ariosto, who owes more to Arabian fable than his commentators have hitherto supposed, seems to have been no stranger to the halls of Argenk when he described the fountain of Merlin :

Era una delle fonti di Merlino  
Delle quattro di Francia da lui fatte ;  
D'intorno cinta di bel marmo fino,  
Lucido, e terso, e bianco più che latte.  
Quivi d' intaglio con lavor divino  
Avea Merlino immagini ritratte.  
Direste che spiravano, e se prive  
Non fossero di voce, ch' eran vive.

Quivi una Bestia uscìr della foresta  
Parea di crudel vista, odiosa, e brutta,  
Che avea le orecchie d'asino, e la testa  
Di lupo, e i denti, e per gran fame asciutta :  
Branche avea di leon ; l'altro, che resta,  
Tutto era volpe.

*Holding his right hand motionless on his heart.* Sandys observes that the application of the right hand to the heart is the customary mode of eastern salutation ; but the perseverance of the votaries of Eblis in this attitude was intended to express their devotion to him both heart and hand.

Page 143. *In my life time I filled, &c.* This recital agrees with those in the Koran and other Arabian legends.

Page 144. *An unrelenting fire preys on my heart.* Hariri, to convey the most forcible idea of extreme anxiety, represents the heart as tormented by fierce burning coals ; this form of speech, it is observed, is proverbial, but do we not see whence the proverb arose ? Chappelow's *Six Assemblies*, p. 106.

Page 145. *In the abode of vengeance and despair.* Thus Dante's description over the gate of hell :

Per me si va nella città dolente :  
 Per me si va nell' eterno dolore :  
 Per me si va tra la perduta gente.  
 Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore :  
 Fecemi la divina potestate,  
 La somma sapienza, e 'l primo amore.  
 Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,  
 Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro :  
 Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che 'ntrate.

*Canto 3.*

Through me you pass to Mourning's dark domain ;  
 Through me to scenes where Grief must ever pine ;  
 Through me, to Misery's devoted train.  
 Justice and power in my Great Founder join,  
 And love and wisdom all his fabrics rear ;  
 Wisdom above control, and love divine !  
 Before me Nature saw no works appear,  
 Save works eternal : such was I ordained.  
 Quit every hope, all ye who enter here.

How much have the public to regret, after the specimen given, that Mr. Hayley did not complete the *Inferno* !

Page 147. *Carathis on the back of an Afrit.* The expedition of the Afrit in fetching Carathis is characteristic of this order of dives. We read in the Koran that another of the fraternity

“For a model of grave and majestic language, ‘Rasselas’ will claim perhaps the first place in English composition ; nor do I recollect any work of the kind that contains so many profound reflections, and, with occasional reserve as to their generality, so many true ones.”—LEIGH HUNT.



## PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.



THE following incomparable tale was published in 1759; and the early familiarity with Eastern manners which Johnson derived from his translation of Father Lobo's travels into Abyssinia, may be presumed to have led him to fix his opening scene in that country; while Rassela Christos, the general of Sultan Sequid, mentioned in that work, may have suggested the name of his speculative prince. Rasselas was written in the evenings of a single week, and sent to the press in portions, with the amiable view of defraying the funeral expenses of the author's aged mother, and discharging her few remaining debts. The sum, however, which he received for it does not seem large to those who know its subsequent popularity. None of his works have been more widely circulated; and the admiration which it has attracted in almost every country of Europe, proves that, with all its depression and sadness, it does utter a voice that meets with an assenting answer in the hearts of all who have tried life, and found its emptiness. John-

son's view of our lot on earth was always gloomy, and the circumstances under which Rasselas was composed were calculated to add a deepened tinge of melancholy to its speculations on human folly, misery, or malignity. Many of the subjects discussed are known to have been those which had agitated Johnson's mind. Among them is the question whether the departed ever revisit the places that knew them on earth, and how far they may take an interest in the welfare of those over whom they watched when here. The reader may contemplate the moralist standing on the border of his mother's grave, and asking, with anxious agony, whether that dark bourn, once passed, terminated for ever the cares of maternity and love. The frivolous and the proud, who think not, or acknowledge not, that there are secrets in both matter and mind of which their philosophy has not dreamed, may smile at what they may, in their derision, term such weak and idle inquiries. But on them the most powerful minds that ever illuminated this world have fastened with an intense curiosity; and, owning their fears or their ignorance, have not dared to disavow their belief.

It is not to be denied that Rasselas displays life as one unvaried series of disappointments, and leaves the mind at its close in painful depression. This effect has been considered an evil, and regarded

even as similar to that produced by the doctrines of Voltaire, Bolingbroke, and Rousseau, who combined everything venerable on earth with ridicule, treated virtue and vice with equal contemptuous indifference, and laid bare, with cruel mockery, the vanity of all mortal wishes, prospects, and pursuits. Their motive for all this, we need not pause in this place to examine. But a distinction may be made between the melancholy of the heart and the melancholy of the mind; while the latter is sceptical, sour, and misanthropic, the former is passionate, tender, and religious. Those who are under the influence of the one become inactive, morose, or heedless, detecting the follies of the wisest, and the frailties of the best, they scoff at the very name of virtue; they spurn as visionary and weak every attempt to meliorate man's condition, and from their conviction of the earthward tendency of his mind, they bound his destinies by this narrow world and its concerns. But those whose hearts are penetrated with a feeling for human infirmity and sorrow are benevolent and active; considering man as the victim of sin and woe and death, for a cause which reason cannot unfold, but which religion promises to terminate, they soothe the short-lived disappointments of life by pointing to a loftier and more lasting state. *Candide* is the book of the one party, *Rasselas* of the other. They appeared nearly together; they exhibit the same picture of change and misery and crime.

But the one demoralised a continent, and gave birth to lust, rapine, and bloodshed; the other has blessed many a heart, and gladdened the vale of sorrow with many a rill of pure and living water. Voltaire may be likened to the venomous toad of Eastern allegory, which extracts a deadly poison from that sunbeam which bears health, and light, and life to all besides. The philosopher in *Rasselas*, like some holy and aged man who has well nigh run his course in recounting the toils and perils of his pilgrimage, may sadden the young heart, and crush the fond hopes of inexperience; but, while he wounds, he presents the antidote and the balm, and tells when promises will be realised, and hopes will no more be disappointed. We have ventured to detain our readers thus long from *Rasselas* itself, because, from its similar view of life with the sceptical school, many well-intentioned men have apprehended its effects might be the same. We have, therefore, attempted briefly to distinguish the sources whence these different writings have issued, and, we trust, we have pointed out their remoteness from each other. To be restless and weary of the dull details and incomplete enjoyments of life is common to all lofty minds. Frederick of Prussia sought in the bosom of a cold philosophy to chill every generous impulse, and each warm aspiration after immortality; but he painfully felt how inefficient was grandeur or power to fill the heart, and plaintively exclaimed to

Maupertius, "Que notre vie est peu de chose;" all is vanity. The philosophy of *Rasselas*, however, though it pronounces on the unsatisfactory nature of all human enjoyments, and though its perusal may check the worldling in his mirth, and bring down the mighty in his pride, does not with the philosophic conqueror sullenly despair, but gently soothes the mourner by the prospect of a final recompense and repose. Its pages inculcate the same lesson as those of the "*Rambler*," but "the precept which is tedious in a formal essay may acquire attractions in a tale, and the sober charms of truth be divested of their austerity by the graces of innocent fiction."





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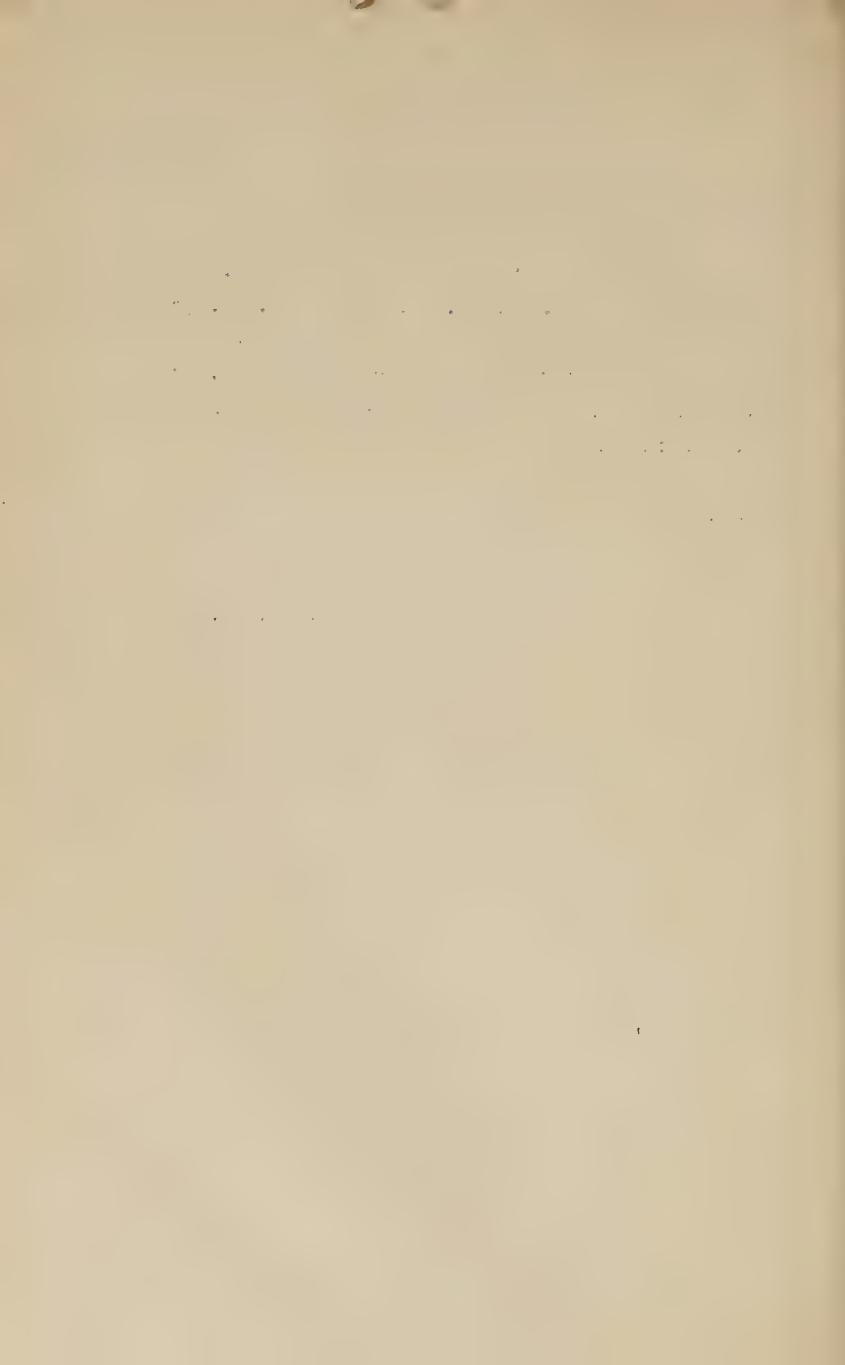
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THE  
HISTORY OF RASSELAS,  
PRINCE OF ABYSSINIA.

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CHAPTER I.

*DESCRIPTION OF A PALACE IN A VALLEY.*

YE who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.

Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperor, in whose dominions the Father of Waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace with the other sons and daughters of Abyssinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne



The place which the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abyssinian princes, was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summits overhang the middle part. The only passage by which it could be entered was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it has long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth, which opened into the valley, was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massy that no man without the help of engines could open or shut them.

From the mountains on every side rivulets descended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle, inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake discharged its superfluities by a stream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern side, and fell with dreadful noise from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more.

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits from the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or browse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures, on another all the beasts of chase frisk-

ing in the lawns; the sprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the solemn elephant reposing in the shade. All diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, supplied its inhabitants with the necessities of life, and all delights and superfluities were added at the annual visit which the emperor paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the sound of music; and during eight days every one that resided in the valley was required to propose whatever might contribute to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time. Every desire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleasure were called to gladden the festivity; and musicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers showed their activity before the princes, in hope that they should pass their lives in this blissful captivity; to which those only were admitted whose performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of security and delight which this retirement afforded, that they to whom it was new, always desired that it might be perpetual; and as those on whom the iron gate had once closed were never suffered to return, the effect of long experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new schemes of delight, and new competitors for imprisonment.

The palace stood on an eminence raised about thirty paces above the surface of the lake. It was

divided into many squares or courts, built with greater or less magnificence, according to the rank of those for whom they were designed. The roofs were turned into arches of massy stone, joined by cement that grew harder by time, and the building stood from century to century deriding the solstitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This house, which was so large as to be fully known to none but some ancient officers who successively inherited the secrets of the place, was built as if suspicion herself had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and secret passage, every square had a communication with the rest, either from the upper storeys by private galleries, or by subterranean passages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unsuspected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had deposited their treasures. They then closed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmost exigencies of the kingdom, and recorded their accumulations in a book which was itself concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperor, attended by the prince who stood next in succession.

## CHAPTER II.

*THE DISCONTENT OF RASSELAS IN THE HAPPY  
VALLEY.*

HERE the sons and daughters of Abyssinia lived only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose, attended by all that were skilful to delight, and gratified with whatever the senses can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and slept in the fortresses of security. Every art was practised to make them pleased with their own condition. The sages who instructed them told them of nothing but the miseries of public life, and described all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where discord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man. To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with songs, the subject of which was the *happy valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments, and revelry and merriment was the business of every hour, from the dawn of morning to the close of even.

These methods were generally successful; few of the princes had ever wished to enlarge their bounds, but passed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature could bestow, and pitied those whom fate had excluded from this

seat of tranquillity, as the sport of chance and the slaves of misery.

Thus they rose in the morning and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves; all but Rasselas, who, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks and silent meditation. He often sat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him; he rose abruptly in the midst of the song, and hastily retired beyond the sound of music. His attendants observed the change, and endeavoured to renew his love of pleasure; he neglected their officiousness, repulsed their invitations, and spent day after day on the banks of rivulets sheltered with trees, where he sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes observed the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes. This singularity of his humour made him much observed. One of the sages, in whose conversation he had formerly delighted, followed him secretly, in hope of discovering the cause of his disquiet. Rasselas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for some time fixed his eyes upon the goats that were browsing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

“What,” said he, “makes the difference between man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast that strays beside me has the same corporeal

necessities with myself ; he is hungry, and crops the grass ; he is thirsty, and drinks the stream ; his thirst and hunger are appeased ; he is satisfied, and sleeps ; he arises again, and is hungry ; he is again fed, and is at rest. I am hungry and thirsty like him, but when thirst and hunger cease I am not at rest ; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with fulness. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy ; I long again to be hungry, that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves, where they sit in seeming happiness on the branches, and waste their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds. I likewise can call the lutanist and the singer, but the sounds that pleased me yesterday weary me to-day, and will grow yet more wearisome to-morrow. I can discover within me no power of perception which is not glutted with its proper pleasure, yet I do not feel myself delighted. Man surely has some latent sense for which this place affords no gratification ; or he has some desires distinct from sense which must be satisfied before he can be happy."

After this he lifted up his head, and seeing the moon rising, walked towards the palace. As he passed through the fields, and saw the animals around him, "Ye," said he, "are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you, burdened with myself ; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity ; for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses from which ye are free ; I fear pain when I do not feel it ; I sometimes shrink at evils

recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated. Surely the equity of providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments."

With observations like these the prince amused himself as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacency in his own perspicuity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diversions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.



## CHAPTER III.

*THE WANTS OF HIM THAT WANTS NOTHING.*

ON the next day his old instructor, imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and officiously sought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, having long considered him as one whose intellects were exhausted, was not very willing to afford : " Why," said he, " does this man thus obtrude upon me ? shall I be never suffered to forget those lectures which pleased only while they were new, and, to become new again, must be forgotten ? " He then walked into the wood, and composed himself to his usual meditations ; when, before his thoughts had taken any settled form, he perceived his pursuer at his side, and was at first prompted by his impatience to go hastily away ; but, being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once revered and still loved, he invited him to sit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately observed in the prince, and to inquire why he so often retired from the pleasures of the palace, to loneliness and silence. " I fly from pleasure," said the prince, " because pleasure

has ceased to please: I am lonely because I am miserable, and am unwilling to cloud with my presence the happiness of others." "You, sir," said the sage, "are the first who has complained of misery in the *happy valley*. I hope to convince you that your complaints have no real cause. You are here in full possession of all the Emperor of Abyssinia can bestow; here is neither labour to be endured nor danger to be dreaded, yet here is all that labour or danger can procure or purchase. Look round and tell me which of your wants is without supply; if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?"

"That I want nothing," said the prince, "or that I know not what I want, is the cause of my complaint; if I had any known want, I should have a certain wish; that wish would excite endeavour, and I should not then repine to see the sun move so slowly towards the western mountain, or lament when the day breaks and sleep will no longer hide me from myself. When I see the kids and the lambs chasing one another, I fancy I should be happy if I had something to pursue. But, possessing all that I can want, I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is still more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me how the day may now seem as short as in my childhood, while nature was yet fresh, and every moment showed me what I never had observed before. I have already enjoyed too much; give me something to desire." The old man was surprised at this new species of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be

silent. "Sir," said he, "if you had seen the miseries of the world, you would know how to value your present state." "Now," said the prince, "you have given me something to desire ; I shall long to see the miseries of the world, since the sight of them is necessary to happiness."

## CHAPTER IV.

*THE PRINCE CONTINUES TO GRIEVE AND MUSE.*

AT this time the sound of music proclaimed the hour of repast, and the conversation was concluded. The old man went away sufficiently discontented, to find that his reasonings had produced the only conclusions which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life shame and grief are of short duration ; whether it be that we bear easily what we have borne long ; or that, finding ourselves in age less regarded, we less regard others ; or that we look with slight regard upon afflictions to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whose views were extended to a wider space, could not speedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promised him, because he considered that in a long time much must be endured ; he now rejoiced in his youth, because in many years much might be done. This first beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the lustre of his eyes. He was fired with the desire of doing something, though he knew not yet with distinctness either end or means. He was now no longer gloomy and unsocial ; but, con-

sidering himself as master of a secret stock of happiness, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be busy in all schemes of diversion, and endeavoured to make others pleased with the state of which he himself was weary. But pleasures never can be so multiplied or continued as not to leave much of life unemployed; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could spend without suspicion in solitary thought. The load of life was much lightened: he went eagerly into the assemblies, because he supposed the frequency of his presence necessary to the success of his purposes; he retired gladly to privacy, because he had now a subject of thought. His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen; to place himself in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures; but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness.

Thus passed twenty months of the life of Rasselas. He busied himself so intensely in visionary bustle, that he forgot his real solitude; and, amidst hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to consider by what means he should mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was sitting on a bank, he feigned to himself an orphan virgin robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind, that he started up in the

maid's defence, and ran forward to seize the plunderer with all the eagerness of real pursuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Rasselas could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary, by perseverance, him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then, raising his eyes to the mountain, "This," said he, "is the fatal obstacle that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleasure, and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to surmount!" Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse, and remembered that since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. "In life," said he, "is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or the imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reasonably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the four-and-twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed it; but of twenty months to come who can assure me?"

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him

deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself. "The rest of my time," said he, "has been lost by the crime or folly of my ancestors, and the absurd institutions of my country; I remember it with disgust, yet without remorse: but the months that have passed since new light darted into my soul, since I formed a scheme of reasonable felicity, have been squandered by my own fault. I have lost that which can never be restored; I have seen the sun rise and set for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven; in this time the birds have left the nest of their mother, and committed themselves to the woods and to the skies: the kid has forsaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rocks in quest of independent sustenance. I only have made no advances, but am still helpless and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admonished me of the flux of life; the stream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth, and the instruction of the planets. Twenty months are passed, who shall restore them?"

These sorrowful meditations fastened upon his mind; he passed four months in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves, and was awakened to more vigorous exertion by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, That what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious; and Rasselas reproached himself that he had not discovered it, having not known or not considered how many useful hints are obtained



by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardour to distant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the means of escaping from the valley of happiness.

## CHAPTER V.

*THE PRINCE MEDITATES HIS ESCAPE.*

HE now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature, which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none that once had passed were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in the grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the power of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was by its position exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and looking down at a time when the sun shone strongly upon its mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but, having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In these fruitless searches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements which beguiled his labour and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible inquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet abated; he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search by new toils for interstices which he knew could not be found, yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

## CHAPTER VI.

*A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING.*

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the happy valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleasure of its inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanic powers, who had contrived many engines both of use and recreation. By a wheel, which the stream turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence it was distributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial showers. One of the groves appropriated to the ladies was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet that ran through it gave a constant motion; and instruments of soft music were placed at proper distances, of which some played by the impulse of the wind, and some by the power of the stream.

This artist was sometimes visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot; he saw that the design was practicable on a level surface, and with expressions of great esteem solicited its completion. The workman was pleased to find

himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honours. "Sir," said he, "you have seen but a small part of what the mechanic sciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that instead of the tardy conveyance of ships and chariots, man might use the swifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleness need crawl upon the ground."

This hint rekindled the prince's desire of passing the mountains; having seen what the mechanist had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet resolved to inquire further, before he suffered hope to afflict him by disappointment. "I am afraid," said he to the artist, "that your imagination prevails over your skill, and that you now tell me rather what you wish than what you know. Every animal has his element assigned to him; the birds have the air, and man and beasts the earth." "So," replied the mechanist, "fishes have the water, in which yet beasts can swim by nature, and men by art. He that can swim needs not despair to fly: to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler. We are only to proportion our power of resistance to the different density of matter through which we are to pass. You will be necessarily upborn by the air, if you can renew any impulse upon it faster than the air can recede from the pressure."

"But the exercise of swimming," said the prince, "is very laborious; the strongest limbs are soon wearied; I am afraid the act of flying will be yet

more violent; and wings will be of no great use unless we can fly further than we can swim."

"The labour of rising from the ground," said the artist, "will be great, as we see it in the heavier domestic fowls; but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction and the body's gravity will be gradually diminished, till we shall arrive at a region where the man will float in the air without any tendency to fall; no care will then be necessary but to move forwards, which the gentlest impulse will effect. You, sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth and all its inhabitants rolling beneath him, and presenting to him successively, by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the same parallel. How must it amuse the pendant spectator to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities and deserts! To survey with equal serenity the marts of trade and the fields of battle; mountains invested by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty and lulled by peace! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all his passage; pass over to distant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other!"

"All this," said the prince, "is much to be desired, but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in these regions of speculation and tranquillity. I have been told that respiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet from these precipices, though so high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very easy to fall; therefore I suspect that, from any height where

life can be supported, there may be danger of too quick descent."

"Nothing," replied the artist, "will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the first flight at my own hazard. I have considered the structure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings most easily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I shall begin my task to-morrow, and in a year expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and pursuit of man. But I will work only on this condition, that the art shall not be divulged, and that you shall not require me to make wings for any but ourselves."

"Why," said Rasselas, "should you envy others so great an advantage? All skill ought to be exerted for universal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindness that he has received."

"If men were all virtuous," returned the artist, "I should with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas, could afford any security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light at once with irresistible violence upon the capital of a fruitful region that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated by the sudden descent of some of the naked nations that swarm on the coast of the southern sea."



The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work from time to time, observed its progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and to unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence seized upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finished, and on a morning appointed the maker appeared, furnished for flight, on a little promontory ; he waved his pinions awhile to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no use in the air, sustained him in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

## CHAPTER VII.

*THE PRINCE FINDS A MAN OF LEARNING.*

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event, only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the happy valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand; he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwithstanding all his endeavours to support himself, discontent by degrees preyed upon him, and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which in these countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had ever been known; the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestic amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was particularly seized by a poem which Imlac rehearsed, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verses a second time; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himself happy in having found a man who knew the world so well, and could so skilfully paint the scenes of life. He asked a thousand questions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a stranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curiosity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and instruction, so that the prince regretted the necessity of sleep, and longed till the morning should renew his pleasure.

As they were sitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his history, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced, to close his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Rasselas was called to a concert, and obliged to restrain his curiosity till the evening.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*THE HISTORY OF IMLAC.*

THE close of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only season of diversion and entertainment, and it was therefore midnight before the music ceased and the princesses retired. Rasselas then called for his companion, and required him to begin the story of his life.

"Sir," said Imlac, "my history will not be long : the life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself.

"I was born in the kingdom of Goiama, at no great distance from the fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant, who traded between the inland countries of Afric and the ports of the Red Sea. He was honest, frugal, and diligent, but of mean sentiments and narrow comprehension ; he desired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, lest he should be spoiled by the governors of the province."

"Surely," said the prince, "my father must be

negligent of his charge, if any man in his dominions dares take that which belongs to another. Does he not know that kings are accountable for injustice permitted as well as done? If I were emperor, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity. My blood boils when I am told that a merchant durst not enjoy his honest gains, for fear of losing them by the rapacity of power. Name the governor who robbed the people, that I may declare his crimes to the emperor."

"Sir," said Imlac, "your ardour is the natural effect of virtue, animated by youth : the time will come when you will acquit your father, and perhaps hear with less impatience of the governor. Oppression is, in the Abyssinian dominions, neither frequent nor tolerated ; but no form of government has yet been discovered by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination supposes power on one part, and subjection on the other ; and, if power be in the hands of men, it will sometimes be abused. The vigilance of the supreme magistrate may do much, but much will still remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can seldom punish all that he knows."

"This," said the prince, "I do not understand, but I had rather hear thee than dispute. Continue thy narration."

"My father," proceeded Imlac, "originally intended that I should have no other education than such as might qualify me for commerce ; and, discovering in me great strength of memory and quickness of apprehension, often declared his hope that I

should be some time the richest man in Abyssinia."

"Why," said the prince, "did thy father desire the increase of his wealth, when it was already greater than he durst discover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconsistencies cannot both be true."

"Inconsistencies," answered Imlac, "cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true. Yet diversity is not inconsistency. My father might expect a time of great security. However, some desire is necessary to keep life in motion, and he whose real wants are supplied, must admit those of fancy."

"This," said the prince, "I can in some measure conceive. I repent that I interrupted thee."

"With this hope," proceeded Imlac, "he sent me to school; but when I had once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence, and the pride of invention, I began silently to despise riches, and determined to disappoint the purpose of my father, whose grossness of conception raised my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderness would expose me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been instructed by successive masters in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me something new, I lived in a continual course of gratifications; but, as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with which I had been used to look on my instructors; because, when the lesson was ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men.

“At length my father resolved to initiate me in commerce: and, opening one of his subterranean treasuries, counted out ten thousand pieces of gold. ‘This, young man,’ said he, ‘is the stock with which you must negotiate. I began with less than the fifth part, and you see how diligence and parsimony have increased it. This is your own to waste or to improve. If you squander it by negligence or caprice, you must wait for my death before you will be rich; if, in four years, you double your stock, we will henceforward let subordination cease, and live together as friends and partners; for he shall always be equal with me, who is equally skilled in the art of growing rich.’

“We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled to the shore of the Red Sea. When I cast my eye on the expanse of waters, my heart bounded like that of a prisoner escaped. I felt an unextinguishable curiosity kindle in my mind, and resolved to snatch this opportunity of seeing the manners of other nations, and of learning sciences unknown in Abyssinia.

“I remembered that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my stock, not by a promise which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur; and therefore determined to gratify my predominant desire, and by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity.

“As I was supposed to trade without connection with my father, it was easy for me to become acquainted with the master of a ship, and procure a



passage to some other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage; it was sufficient for me that, wherever I wandered, I should see a country which I had not seen before. I therefore entered a ship bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father, declaring my intention."

## CHAPTER IX.

*THE HISTORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.*

WHEN I first entered upon the world of waters, and lost sight of land, I looked round about me with pleasing terror, and, thinking my soul enlarged by the boundless prospect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without satiety ; but, in a short time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only see again what I had already seen. I then descended into the ship, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleasures would not end like this, in disgust and disappointment. Yet surely, said I, the ocean and the land are very different ; the only variety of water is rest and motion, but the earth has mountains and valleys, deserts and cities it is inhabited by men of different customs and contrary opinions ; and I may hope to find variety in life, though I should miss it in nature.

“ With this thought I quieted my mind, and amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of navigation, which I have never practised, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

“ I was almost weary of my naval amusements when we landed safely at Surat. I secured my

money, and, purchasing some commodities for show, joined myself to a caravan that was passing into the inland country. My companions, for some reason or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my inquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, considered me as a novice whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn, at the usual expense, the art of fraud. They exposed me to the thefts of servants and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered upon false pretences, without any advantage to themselves, but that of rejoicing in the superiority of their own knowledge."

"Stop a moment," said the prince. "Is there such depravity in man, as that he should injure another without benefit to himself? I can easily conceive that all are pleased with superiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which, being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reason to applaud themselves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have shown by warning as betraying you."

"Pride," said Imlac, "is seldom delicate, it will please itself with very mean advantages; and envy feels not its own happiness, but when it may be compared with the misery of others. They were my enemies, because they grieved to think me rich; and my oppressors, because they delighted to find me weak."

"Proceed," said the prince; "I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to mistaken motives."

"In this company," said Imlac, "I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indostan, the city in which the great

Mogul commonly resides. I applied myself to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converse with the learned men, some of whom I found morose and reserved, and others easy and communicative; some were unwilling to teach another what they had with difficulty learned themselves; and some showed that the end of their studies was to gain the dignity of instructing.

“To the tutor of the young princes I recommended myself so much, that I was presented to the emperor as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperor asked me many questions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect anything that he uttered above the power of a common man, he dismissed me astonished at his wisdom, and enamoured of his goodness.

“My credit was now so high, that the merchants with whom I had travelled applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the court. I was surprised at their confidence of solicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cool indifference, and showed no tokens of shame or sorrow.

“They then urged their request with the offer of a bribe; but what I would not do for kindness, I would not do for money, and refused them, not because they had injured me, but because I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made use of my credit to cheat those who should buy their wares.

“Having resided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many

remains of ancient magnificence and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

“From Persia I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation, at once pastoral and warlike, who live without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds, and who have yet carried on through all ages an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions.”

## CHAPTER X.

*IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A DISSERTATION  
UPON POETRY.*

“WHEREVER I went, I found that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the Angelic Nature. And yet it fills me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best; whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent, which is received by accident at first; or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe nature and passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art; that the first excel in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

“I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca. But I soon found that no man was ever great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors; I could never describe what I had not seen; I could not hope to move those with delight or terror whose interests and opinions I did not understand.

“Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw everything with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified; no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged the mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination; he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety: for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he who knows most will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratify-



ing his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

“All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to study; and every country which I have surveyed has contributed something to my poetical powers.”

“In so wide a survey,” said the prince, “you must surely have left much unobserved. I have lived till now within the circuit of these mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the sight of something which I had never beheld before, or never heeded.”

“The business of a poet,” said Imlac, “is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances: he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit, in his portraits of nature, such prominent and striking features as recall the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter discriminations—which one may have remarked, and another have neglected—for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness.

“But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the pre-

judices of his age or country ; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state ; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same ; he must, therefore, content himself with the slow progress of his name ; condemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations—as a being superior to time and place.

“ His labour is not yet at an end : he must know many languages and many sciences ; and, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must, by incessant practice, familiarise to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony.”

## CHAPTER XI.

*IMLAC'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED. A HINT ON  
PILGRIMAGE.*

IMLAC now felt the enthusiastic fit, and was proceeding to aggrandise his own profession, when the prince cried out, "Enough! thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration."

"To be a poet," said Imlac, "is indeed very difficult."

"So difficult," returned the prince, "that I will at present hear no more of his labours. Tell me whither you went when you had seen Persia."

"From Persia," said the poet, "I travelled through Syria, and for three years resided in Palestine, where I conversed with great numbers of the northern and western nations of Europe; the nations which are now in possession of all power and all knowledge; whose armies are irresistible, and whose fleets command the remotest parts of the globe. When I compared these men with the natives of our own kingdom, and those that surround us, they appeared almost another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wish for anything that may not be obtained; a thousand arts, of which we never heard, are continually labouring for their convenience and pleasure; and whatever their own climate has denied them, is supplied by their commerce."

"By what means," said the prince, "are the Europeans thus powerful? or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiatics and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us thither."

"They are more powerful, sir, than we," answered Imlac, "because they are wiser. Knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being."

"When," said the prince, with a sigh, "shall I be able to visit Palestine, and mingle with this mighty confluence of nations? Till that happy moment shall arrive, let me fill up the time with such representations as thou canst give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that assembles such numbers in that place, and cannot but consider it as the centre of wisdom and piety, to which the best and wisest men of every land must be continually resorting."

"There are some nations," said Imlac, "that send few visitants to Palestine; for many numerous and learned sects in Europe concur to censure pilgrimage as superstitious, or deride it as ridiculous."

"You know," said the prince, "how little my life has made me acquainted with diversity of opinions. It will be too long to hear the arguments on both sides; you that have considered them tell me the result."

"Pilgrimage," said Imlac, "like many other acts

of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journeys in search of truth are not commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety, or it inevitably produces dissipation of mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and I believe no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions. That the Supreme Being may be more easily propitiated in one place than in another, is the dream of idle superstition; but that some places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will justify. He who supposes that his vices may be more successfully combated in Palestine, will, perhaps, find himself mistaken; yet he may go thither without folly: he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, dishonours at once his reason and religion."

"These," said the prince, "are European distinctions. I will consider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are those nations happier than we?"

"There is so much infelicity," said the poet, "in the world, that scarce any man has leisure from his own distresses to estimate the comparative happiness of others. Knowledge is certainly one of the means of

pleasure, as is confessed by the natural desire which every mind feels of increasing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced : it is a vacuity in which the soul sits motionless and torpid for want of attraction ; and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am therefore inclined to conclude, that if nothing counteracts the natural consequence of learning, we grow more happy as our minds take a wider range.

“In enumerating the particular comforts of life, we shall find many advantages on the side of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diseases with which we languish and perish. We suffer inclemencies of weather which they can obviate. They have engines for the despatch of many laborious works, which we must perform by manual industry. There is such communication between distant places that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another. Their policy removes all public inconveniences : they have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And, if we descend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their possessions are more secure.”

“They are surely happy,” said the prince, “who have all these conveniences, of which I envy none so much as the facility with which separated friends interchange their thoughts.”

“The Europeans,” answered Imlac, “are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed.”

## CHAPTER XII.

*THE STORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.*

"I AM not yet willing," said the prince, "to suppose that happiness is so parsimoniously distributed to mortals; nor can believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I should be able to fill every day with pleasure. I would injure no man, and should provoke no resentment; I would relieve every distress, and should enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I would choose my friends among the wise, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore should be in no danger from treachery or unkindness. My children should, by my care, be learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to molest him who might call on every side to thousands enriched by his bounty, or assisted by his power? And why should not life glide quietly away in the soft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear by their effects to be rather specious than useful. Let us leave them, and pursue our journey."

"From Palestine," said Imlac, "I passed through many regions of Asia, in the more civilised kingdoms as a trader, and among the barbarians of the mountains as a pilgrim. At last I began to long for my



native country, that I might repose, after my travels and fatigues, in the places where I had spent my earliest years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myself those with whom I had sported away the gay hours of dawning life, sitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and listening to my counsels.

“When this thought had taken possession of my mind, I considered every moment as wasted which did not bring me nearer to Abyssinia. I hastened into Egypt, and, notwithstanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in inquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; some brought thither by the love of knowledge, some by the hope of gain, and many by the desire of living after their own manner without observation, and of lying hid in the obscurity of multitudes: for in a city, populous as Cairo, it is possible to obtain at the same time the gratifications of society, and the secrecy of solitude.

“From Cairo I travelled to Suez, and embarked on the Red Sea, passing along the coast till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here I joined myself to a caravan, and re-entered my native country.

“I now expected the caresses of my kinsmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had set upon riches, would own with gladness and pride a

son who was able to add to the felicity and honour of the nation. But I was soon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to some other provinces. Of my companions the greater part was in the grave; of the rest, some could with difficulty remember me, and some considered me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

“A man used to vicissitudes is not easily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my disappointment, and endeavoured to recommend myself to the nobles of the kingdom; they admitted me to their tables, heard my story, and dismissed me. I opened a school, and was prohibited to teach. I then resolved to sit down in the quiet of domestic life, and addressed a lady that was fond of my conversation, but rejected my suit because my father was a merchant.

“Wearied at last with solicitation and repulses, I resolved to hide myself for ever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion and caprice of others. I waited for the time when the gate of the *happy valley* should open, that I might bid farewell to hope and fear. The day came; my performance was distinguished with favour, and I resigned myself with joy to perpetual confinement.”

“Hast thou here found happiness at last?” said Rasselas. “Tell me without reserve; art thou content with thy condition? or dost thou wish to be again wandering and inquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate their lot, and, at the annual

visit of the emperor, invite others to partake of their felicity."

"Great prince," said Imlac, "I shall speak the truth; I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and by recollection of the incidents of my past life. Yet all this ends in the sorrowful consideration, that my acquirements are now useless, and that none of my pleasures can be again enjoyed. The rest, whose minds have no impression but of the present moment, are either corroded by malignant passions, or sit stupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy."

"What passions can infest those," said the prince, "who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repressed by community of enjoyments."

"There may be community," said Imlac, "of material possessions, but there can never be community of love or of esteem. It must happen that one will please more than another; he that knows himself despised will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him. The invitations by which they allure others to a state which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves and of each other, and expect

to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves.

"From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can say that he is wretched by my persuasion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually soliciting admission to captivity, and wish that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger."

"My dear Imlac," said the prince, "I will open to thee my whole heart. I have long meditated an escape from the happy valley. I have examined the mountains on every side, but find myself insuperably barred; teach me the way to break my prison; thou shalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the choice of life."

"Sir," answered the poet, "your escape will be difficult, and, perhaps, you may soon repent your curiosity. The world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests and boiling with whirlpools: you will be sometimes overwhelmed by the waves of violence, and sometimes dashed against the rocks of treachery. Amidst wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wish a thousand times for those seats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear."

"Do not seek to deter me from my purpose," said the prince; "I am impatient to see what thou hast seen; and, since thou art thyself weary of the valley, it is evident that thy former state was better than

this. Whatever be the consequence of my experiment, I am resolved to judge with mine own eyes of the various conditions of men, and then to make deliberately my choice of life."

"I am afraid," said Imlac, "you are hindered by stronger restraints than my persuasions; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill."

## CHAPTER XIII.

*RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.*

THE prince now dismissed his favourite to rest, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable questions for the morning.

Much of his uneasiness was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whose experience could assist him in his designs. His heart was no longer condemned to swell with silent vexation. He thought that even the happy valley might be endured with such a companion; and that, if they could range the world together, he should have nothing further to desire.

In a few days the water was discharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converse without the notice of the rest. The prince, whose thoughts were always on the wing, as he passed by the gate, said, with a countenance of sorrow, "Why art thou so strong, and why is man so weak?"

"Man is not weak," answered his companion; "knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The master of mechanics laughs at strength. I can burst

the gate, but cannot do it secretly. Some other expedient must be tried."

As they were walking on the side of the mountain, they observed that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken shelter among the bushes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. "It has been the opinion of antiquity," said Imlac, "that human reason borrowed many arts from the instinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourselves degraded by learning from the cony. We may escape by piercing the mountain in the same direction. We will begin where the summit hangs over the middle part, and labour upwards till we issue up beyond the prominence."

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this proposal, sparkled with joy. The execution was easy, and the success certain.

No time was now lost. They hastened early in the morning to choose a place proper for their mine. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and brambles, and returned without having discovered any part that favoured their design. The second and the third day were spent in the same manner, and with the same frustration. But, on the fourth, they found a small cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they resolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured instruments proper to hew stone and remove earth, and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerness than vigour. They were presently exhausted by their efforts, and sat





RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.



down to pant upon the grass. The prince for a moment appeared to be discouraged. "Sir," said his companion, "practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will some time have an end. Great works are performed, not by strength, but perseverance: yonder palace was raised by single stones, yet you see its height and spaciousness. He that shall walk with vigour three hours a day, will pass in seven years a space equal to the circumference of the globe."

They returned to their work day after day; and, in a short time, found a fissure in the rock, which enabled them to pass far with very little obstruction. This Rasselas considered as a good omen. "Do not disturb your mind," said Imlac, "with other hopes or fears than reason may suggest: if you are pleased with prognostics of good, you will be terrified likewise with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to superstition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cause of success. This is one of those pleasing surprises which often happen to active resolution. Many things difficult to design prove easy to performance."

## CHAPTER XIV.

*RASSELAS AND IMLAC RECEIVE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.*

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and solaced their toil with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refresh himself with air, found his sister Nekayah standing before the mouth of the cavity. He started and stood confused, afraid to tell his design, and yet hopeless to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repose on her fidelity, and secure her secrecy by a declaration without reserve.

“Do not imagine,” said the princess, “that I came hither as a spy: I had long observed from my window that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the same point, but I did not suppose you had any better reason for the preference than a cooler shade, or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other design than to partake of your conversation. Since, then, not suspicion but fondness has detected you, let me not lose the advantage of my discovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourself, and not less desirous of knowing what is done or suffered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this tasteless tranquillity, which will yet grow more loathsome when you have left me.

You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following."

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other sisters, had no inclination to refuse her request, and grieved that he had lost an opportunity of showing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that she should leave the valley with them; and that, in the meantime, she should watch lest any other straggler should, by chance or curiosity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they saw light beyond the prominence, and, issuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleasures of travel, and in thought was already transported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his escape, had less expectation of pleasure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Rasselas was so much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not soon be persuaded to return into the valley. He informed his sister that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

## CHAPTER XV.

*THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS LEAVE THE VALLEY,  
AND SEE MANY WONDERS.*

THE prince and princess had jewels sufficient to make them rich whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they might hide in their clothes; and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princess was followed only by a single favourite, who did not know whither she was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other side. The princess and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and seeing nothing to bound their prospect, considered themselves as in danger of being lost in a dreary vacuity. They stopped and trembled. "I am almost afraid," said the princess, "to begin a journey of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immense plain, where I may be approached on every side by men whom I never saw." The prince felt nearly the same emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac smiled at their terrors, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princess continued irresolute till she had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found some shepherds in the

field, who set milk and fruits before them. The princess wondered that she did not see a palace ready for her reception, and a table spread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, she drank the milk and ate the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the products of the valley.

They travelled forward by easy journeys, being all unaccustomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing that, though they might be missed, they could not be pursued. In a few days they came into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expressed at the diversity of manners, stations, and employments.

Their dress was such as might not bring upon them the suspicion of having anything to conceal; yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princess was frightened, because those that came into her presence did not prostrate themselves before her. Imlac was forced to observe them with great vigilance, lest they should betray their rank by their unusual behaviour, and detained them several weeks in the first village, to accustom them to the sight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to understand that they had for a time laid aside their dignity, and were to expect only such regard as liberality and courtesy could procure. And Imlac having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedness of the commercial race, brought them down to the sea-coast.

The prince and his sister, to whom everything was



new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for some months at the port without any inclination to pass further. Imlac was content with their stay, because he did not think it safe to expose them, unpractised in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At last he began to fear lest they should be discovered, and proposed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretensions to judge for themselves, and referred the whole scheme to his direction. He therefore took passage in a ship to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the princess to enter the vessel. They had a quick and prosperous voyage; and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*THEY ENTER CAIRO, AND FIND EVERY MAN HAPPY.*

As they approached the city, which filled the strangers with astonishment, "This," said Imlac to the prince, "is the place where travellers and merchants assemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you shall live as strangers who have no other end of travel than curiosity; it will soon be observed that we are rich; our reputation will procure us access to all whom we shall desire to know; you will see all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourself at leisure to make your choice of life."

They now entered the town, stunned by the noise, and offended by the crowd. Instruction had not yet so prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to see themselves passed undistinguished along the street, and met by the lowest of the people without reverence or notice. The princess could not at first bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and for some days continued in her chamber, where she was served by her favourite Pekuah as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who understood traffic, sold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a house, which he adorned with such magnificence that he was immedi-

ately considered as a merchant of great wealth. His politeness attracted many acquaintance, and his generosity made him courted by many dependants. His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge and solicited his favour. His companions, not being able to mix in the conversation, could make no discovery of their ignorance or surprise, and were gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language.

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the use and nature of money ; but the ladies could not for a long time comprehend what the merchants did with small pieces of gold and silver, or why things of so little use should be received as equivalent to the necessaries of life.

They studied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to set before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had anything uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the busy, the merchants and the men of learning.

The prince being now able to converse with fluency, and having learned the caution necessary to be observed in his intercourse with strangers, began to accompany Imlac to places of resort, and to enter into all assemblies, that he might make his choice of life.

For some time he thought choice needless, because all appeared to him equally happy. Wherever he went he met gaiety and kindness, and heard the song of joy or the laugh of carelessness. He began to

believe that the world overflowed with universal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand showered liberality, and every heart melted with benevolence: "and who then," said he, "will be suffered to be wretched?"

Imlac permitted the pleasing delusion, and was unwilling to crush the hope of inexperience, till one day, having sat awhile silent, "I know not," said the prince, "what can be the reason that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I see them perpetually and unalterably cheerful, but feel my own mind restless and uneasy. I am unsatisfied with those pleasures which I seem most to court. I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy company as to shun myself, and am only loud and merry to conceal my sadness."

"Every man," said Imlac, "may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly where you passed the last night, there appeared such sprightliness of air and volatility of fancy as might have suited beings of a higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions inaccessible to care or sorrow; yet believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread the moment when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection."

"This," said the prince, "may be true of others, since it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another, and wisdom surely directs us to take the least evil in the choice of life."

"The causes of good and evil," answered Imlac, "are so various and uncertain, so often entangled with each other, so diversified by various relations, and so much subject to accidents which cannot be foreseen, that he who would fix his condition upon incontestable reasons of preference, must live and die inquiring and deliberating."

"But surely," said Rasselas, "the wise men, to whom we listen with reverence and wonder, chose that mode of life for themselves which they thought most likely to make them happy."

"Very few," said the poet, "live by choice. Every man is placed in his present condition by causes which acted without his foresight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate; and therefore you will rarely meet one who does not think the lot of his neighbour better than his own."

"I am pleased to think," said the prince, "that my birth has given me at least one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myself. I have here the world before me; I will review it at leisure: surely happiness is somewhere to be found."

## CHAPTER XVII.

*THE PRINCE ASSOCIATES WITH YOUNG MEN OF  
SPIRIT AND GAIETY.*

RASSELAS rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life. "Youth," cried he, "is the time of gladness: I will join myself to the young men, whose only business is to gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments."

To such societies he was readily admitted; but a few days brought him back weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law, but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The prince soon concluded that he should never be happy in a course of life of which he was ashamed. He thought it unsuitable to a reasonable being to act without a plan, and to be sad or cheerful only by chance. "Happiness," said he, "must be something solid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty."

But his young companions had gained so much of his regard by their frankness and courtesy, that he could not leave them without warning and remon-

strance. "My friends," said he, "I have seriously considered our manners and our prospects, and find that we have mistaken our own interest. The first years of man must make provision for the last. He that never thinks never can be wise. Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable. Let us consider that youth is of no long duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we shall have no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, stop, while to stop is in our power: let us live as men who are some time to grow old, and to whom it will be the most dreadful of all evils to count their past years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced."

They stared awhile in silence one upon another, and at last drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The consciousness that his sentiments were just and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horror of derision. But he recovered his tranquillity, and pursued his search.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

*THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN.*

AS he was one day walking in the street, he saw a spacious building, which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter. He followed the stream of people, and found it a hall or school of declamation, in which professors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a sage raised above the rest, who discoursed with great energy on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronounciation clear, and his diction elegant. He showed, with great strength of sentiment and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of passion, usurps the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against reason, their lawful sovereign. He compared reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in its motion, and delusive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given

from time to time for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course through the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immovable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune by invulnerable patience, concluding, that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in every one's power.

Rasselas listened to him with the veneration due to the instructions of a superior being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a purse of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

"I have found," said the prince, at his return to Imlac, "a man who can teach all that is necessary to be known, who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him. He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons, and conviction

closes his periods. This man shall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines, and imitate his life."

"Be not too hasty," said Imlac, "to trust, or to admire, the teachers of morality; they discourse like angels, but they live like men."

Rasselas, who could not conceive how any man could reason so forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his visit in a few days, and was denied admission. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philosopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes misty, and his face pale. "Sir," said he, "you are come at a time when all human friendship is useless; what I suffer cannot be remedied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever. My views, my purposes, my hopes, are at an end. I am now a lonely being, disunited from society."

"Sir," said the prince, "mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised: we know that death is always near, and it should therefore always be expected." "Young man," answered the philosopher, "you speak like one that has never felt the pangs of separation." "Have you then forgot the precepts," said Rasselas, "which you so powerfully enforced? Has wisdom no strength to arm the heart against calamity? Consider that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason

are always the same." "What comfort," said the mourner, "can truth and reason afford me? of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be restored?"

The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound, and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*A GLIMPSE OF PASTORAL LIFE.*

HE was still eager upon the same inquiry; and having heard of a hermit that lived near the lowest cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his sanctity, resolved to visit his retreat, and inquire whether that felicity, which public life could not afford, was to be found in solitude; and whether a man, whose age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of shunning evils, or enduring them?

Imlac and the princess agreed to accompany him, and, after the necessary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where shepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the pasture. "This," said the poet, "is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence and quiet; let us pass the heat of the day among the shepherd's tents, and know whether all our searches are not to terminate in pastoral simplicity."

The proposal pleased them, and they induced the shepherds, by small presents and familiar questions, to tell their opinion of their own state. They were so rude and ignorant, so little able to compare the

good with the evil of the occupation, and so indistinct in their narratives and descriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident that their hearts were cankered with discontent; that they considered themselves as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with stupid malevolence towards those that were placed above them.

The princess pronounced with vehemence, that she would never suffer these envious savages to be her companions, and that she should not soon be desirous of seeing any more specimens of rustic happiness; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleasures were fabulous; and was yet in doubt whether life had anything that could be justly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when, with a few virtuous and elegant companions, she should gather flowers planted by her own hand, fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and listen without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the shade.

## CHAPTER XX.

*THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY.*

ON the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for shelter. At a small distance they saw a thick wood, which they no sooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The shrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the shades were darkest; the boughs of opposite trees were artificially interwoven; seats of flowery turf were raised in vacant spaces, and a rivulet that wantoned along the side of a winding path, had its banks sometimes opened into small basins, and its stream sometimes obstructed by little mounds of stone heaped together to increase its murmurs.

They passed slowly through the wood, delighted with such unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or who, he could be, that, in those rude and unfrequented regions, had leisure and heart for such harmless luxury.

As they advanced they heard the sound of music, and saw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going still further, beheld a stately palace built



upon a hill surrounded with woods. The laws of eastern hospitality allowed them to enter, and the master welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was skilful enough in appearances soon to discern that they were no common guests, and spread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courtesy of the princess excited his respect. When they offered to depart he entreated their stay, and was the next day still more unwilling to dismiss them than before. They were easily persuaded to stop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now saw all the domestics cheerful, and all the face of nature smiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope that he should find here what he was seeking; but when he was congratulating the master upon his possessions, he answered with a sigh—

“My condition has indeed the appearance of happiness, but appearances are delusive. My prosperity puts my life in danger; the Bassa of Egypt is my enemy, incensed only by my wealth and popularity. I have been hitherto protected against him by the princes of the country: but, as the favour of the great is uncertain, I know not how soon my defenders may be persuaded to share the plunder with the Bassa. I have sent my treasures into a distant country, and, upon the first alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my mansion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted.”

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile: and the princess was so much disturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that she retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*THE HAPPINESS OF SOLITUDE. THE HERMIT'S HISTORY.*

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peasants, to the hermit's cell. It was a cavern in the side of a mountain, overshadowed with palm-trees; at such a distance from the cataract that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, such as composed the mind to pensive meditation, especially when it was assisted by the wind whistling among the branches. The first rude essay of nature had been so much improved by human labour, that the cave contained several apartments appropriated to different uses, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkness or tempests happened to overtake.

The hermit sat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coolness of the evening. On one side lay a book with pens and papers; on the other, mechanical instruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princess observed that he had not the countenance of a man that had found or could teach the way to happiness.

They saluted him with great respect, which he repaid like a man not unaccustomed to the forms of

courts. "My children," said he, "if you have lost your way, you shall be willingly supplied with such conveniences for the night as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell."

They thanked him, and, entering, were pleased with the neatness and regularity of the place. The hermit set flesh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His discourse was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthusiasm. He soon gained the esteem of his guests, and the princess repented of her hasty censure.

At last Imlac began thus: "I do not now wonder that your reputation is so far extended; we have heard at Cairo of your wisdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the CHOICE OF LIFE."

"To him that lives well," answered the hermit, "every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice than to remove from all apparent evil."

"He will remove most certainly from evil," said the prince, "who shall devote himself to that solitude which you have recommended by your example."

"I have indeed lived fifteen years in solitude," said the hermit, "but have no desire that my example should gain any imitators. In my youth I professed arms, and was raised by degrees to the highest military rank. I have traversed wide countries at the head of my troops, and seen many battles and sieges. At last, being disgusted by the preferments of a younger officer, and feeling that my vigour was

beginning to decay, I resolved to close my life in peace, having found the world full of snares, discord, and misery. I had once escaped from the pursuit of the enemy by the shelter of this cavern, and therefore chose it for my final residence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and stored it with all that I was likely to want.

“For some time after my retreat, I rejoiced like a tempest-beaten sailor at his entrance into the harbour, being delighted with the sudden change of the noise and hurry of war to stillness and repose. When the pleasure of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grew in the valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that inquiry is now grown tasteless and irksome. I have been for some time unsettled and distracted; my mind is disturbed with a thousand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, because I have no opportunities of relaxation or diversion. I am sometimes ashamed to think that I could not secure myself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue, and begin to suspect that I was rather impelled by resentment, than led by devotion, into solitude. My fancy riots in scenes of folly, and I lament that I have lost so much and have gained so little. In solitude, if I escape the example of bad men, I want likewise the counsel and conversation of the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of society, and resolve to return into the world to-morrow. The life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout.”

They heard his resolution with surprise, but after a short pause offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a considerable treasure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE LED ACCORDING TO  
NATURE.*

RASSELAS went often to an assembly of learned men, who met at stated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were somewhat coarse, but their conversation was instructive, and their disputations acute, though sometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertist remembered upon what question they began. Some faults were almost general among them : every one was desirous to dictate to the rest, and every one was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him censure a course of life which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him a hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labour of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion



of duty. Others readily allowed that there was a time when the claims of the public were satisfied, and when a man might properly sequester himself, to review his life and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and, perhaps, if shame did not restrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world. "For the hope of happiness," said he, "is so strongly impressed, that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of the present state, whatever it be, we feel, and are forced to confess, the misery; yet, when the same state is again at a distance, imagination paints it as desirable. But the time will surely come, when desire will be no longer our torment, and no man shall be wretched but by his own fault."

"This," said a philosopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, "is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come, when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle than to inquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature, will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire; he will receive and reject with equability of temper; and act or suffer as the

reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions, or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wise by easier means; let them observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove; let them consider the life of animals, whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide, and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the encumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, 'That deviation from nature is deviation from happiness.'"

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. "Sir," said the prince, with great modesty, "as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my closest attention has been fixed upon your discourse; I doubt not the truth of a position which a man so learned has so confidently advanced. Let me only know what it is to live according to nature?"

"When I find young men so humble and so docile," said the philosopher, "I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things."

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was silent; and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*THE PRINCE AND HIS SISTER DIVIDE BETWEEN  
THEM THE WORK OF OBSERVATION.*

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments and further inquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observations and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why, though he had been hitherto frustrated, he might succeed at last.

“We have hitherto,” said she, “known but little of the world; we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power, and in this we have not yet seen the private recesses of domestic peace. Imlac favours not our search, lest we should in time find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us: you shall try what is to be found in the splendour of courts, and I will range the shades of humbler life.

Perhaps command and authority may be the supreme blessings, as they afford most opportunities of doing good ; or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modest habitations of middle fortune ; too low for great designs, and too high for penury and distress."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*THE PRINCE EXAMINES THE HAPPINESS OF HIGH STATIONS.*

RASSELAS applauded the design, and appeared next day with a splendid retinue at the court of the Bassa. He was soon distinguished for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whose curiosity had brought him from distant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent conversation with the Bassa himself.

He was at first inclined to believe that the man must be pleased with his own condition whom all approached with reverence and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. "There can be no pleasure," said he, "equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thousands all made happy by wise administration. Yet, since by the law of subordination this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is surely reasonable to think that there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible, and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a single man only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content."

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he

found no solution of the difficulty. But as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man who stood high in employment hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those who surrounded the Bassa were sent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering censure, and every eye was searching for a fault.

At last the letters of revocation arrived, the Bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

“What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power,” said Rasselas to his sister; “is it without any efficacy to good? or is the subordinate degree only dangerous, and the supreme safe and glorious? Is the Sultan the only happy man in his dominions? or is the Sultan himself subject to the torments of suspicion and the dread of enemies?”

In a short time the second Bassa was deposed. The Sultan that had advanced him was murdered by the Janizaries, and his successor had other views and different favourites.



## CHAPTER XXV.

*THE PRINCESS PURSUES HER INQUIRY WITH MORE  
DILIGENCE THAN SUCCESS.*

THE princess, in the meantime, insinuated herself into many families; for there are few doors through which liberality, joined with good-humour, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houses were airy and cheerful, but Nekayah had been too long accustomed to the conversation of Imlac and her brother, to be much pleased with childish levity, and prattle which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wishes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleasures, poor as they were, could not be preserved pure, but were embittered by petty competitions and worthless emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other; of a quality to which solitude can add nothing, and from which detraction can take nothing away. Many were in love with triflers like themselves, and many fancied that they were in love, when in truth they were only idle. Their affection was not fixed on sense or virtue, and therefore seldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was transient; everything floated in their mind unconnected with the past or future,

so that one desire easily gave way to another, as a second stone cast into the water effaces and confounds the circles of the first.

With these girls she played as with inoffensive animals, and found them proud of her countenance, and weary of her company.

But her purpose was to examine more deeply, and her affability easily persuaded the hearts that were swelling with sorrow to discharge their secrets in her ear; and those whom hope flattered, or prosperity delighted, often courted her to partake their pleasures.

The princess and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private summer-house on the bank of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. "Answer," said she, "great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou waterest through all thy course a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint?"

"You are, then," said Rasselas, "not more successful in private houses than I have been in courts."

"I have, since the last partition of our provinces," said the princess, "enabled myself to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the fairest show of prosperity and peace, and know not one house that is not haunted by some fury that destroys their quiet.

"I did not seek ease among the poor, because I

concluded that there it could not be found. But I saw many poor, whom I had supposed to live in affluence. Poverty has, in large cities, very different appearances; it is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance.

“It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the rest; they support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for the morrow.

“This, however, was an evil, which, though frequent, I saw with less pain, because I could relieve it. Yet some have refused my bounties; more offended with my quickness to detect their wants than pleased with my readiness to succour them; and others, whose exigencies compelled them to admit my kindness, have never been able to forgive their benefactress. Many, however, have been sincerely grateful, without the ostentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favours.” \*

\* In the original edition this chapter ends the first volume.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

*THE PRINCESS CONTINUES HER REMARKS UPON  
PRIVATE LIFE.*

NEKAYAH, perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.

“ In families, where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly discord ; if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells us, a great family, a family likewise is a little kingdom, torn with factions and exposed to revolutions. An unpractised observer expects the love of parents and children to be constant and equal ; but this kindness seldom continues beyond the years of infancy : in a short time the children become rivals to their parents. Benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debased by envy.

“ Parents and children seldom act in concert ; each child endeavours to appropriate the esteem or fondness of the parents, and the parents, with yet less temptation, betray each other to their children ; thus, some place their confidence in the father, and some in the mother, and by degrees the house is filled with artifices and feuds.

“ The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally opposite by the contrary effects of hope and despondence, of expec-

tation and experience, without crime or folly on either side. The colours of life in youth and age appear different, as the face of nature in spring and winter. And how can children credit the assertions of parents, which their own eyes show them to be false?

“ Few parents act in such a manner as much to enforce their maxims by the credit of their lives. The old man trusts wholly to slow contrivance and gradual progressions ; the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man deifies prudence ; the youth commits himself to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openness and candour ; but his father, having suffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to suspect, and too often allured to practise it. Age looks with anger on the temerity of youth, and youth with contempt on the scrupulosity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greatest part, live on to love less and less ; and, if those whom nature has thus closely united are the torments of each other, where shall we look for tenderness and consolation ? ”

“ Surely,” said the prince, “ you must have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance : I am unwilling to believe that the most tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural necessity.”

“ Domestic discord,” answered she, “ is not inevitably and fatally necessary ; but yet it is not easily

avoided. We seldom see that a whole family is virtuous : the good and evil cannot well agree, and the evil can yet less agree with one another ; even the virtuous fall sometimes to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds and tending to extremes. In general, those parents have most reverence that most deserve it : for he that lives well cannot be despised.

“Many other evils infest private life. Some are the slaves of servants whom they have trusted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety by the caprice of rich relations, whom they cannot please and dare not offend. Some husbands are imperious, and some wives perverse : and, as it is always more easy to do evil than good, though the wisdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miserable.”

“If such be the general effect of marriage,” said the prince, “I shall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my interest with that of another, lest I should be unhappy by my partner’s fault.”

“I have met,” said the princess, “with many who live single for that reason ; but I never found that their prudence ought to raise envy. They dream away their time without friendship, without fondness, and are driven to rid themselves of the day, for which they have no use, by childish amusements or vicious delights. They act as beings under the constant sense of some known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with censure. They are peevish at home, and malevolent

abroad; and, as the outlaws of human nature, make it their business and their pleasure to disturb that society which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting sympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity, is a state more gloomy than solitude; it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."

"What then is to be done?" said Rasselas; "the more we inquire, the less we can resolve. Surely he is most likely to please himself that has no other inclination to regard."



## CHAPTER XXVII.

*DISQUISITION UPON GREATNESS.*

THE conversation had a short pause. The prince, having considered his sister's observations, told her that she had surveyed life with prejudice, and supposed misery where she did not find it. "Your narrative," said he, "throws yet a darker gloom upon the prospects of futurity: the predictions of Imlac were but faint sketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately convinced that quiet is not the daughter of grandeur or of power: that her presence is not to be bought by wealth, nor enforced by conquest. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compass, he must be more exposed to opposition from enmity, or miscarriage from chance: whoever has many to please or to govern, must use the ministry of many agents, some of whom will be wicked, and some ignorant; by some he will be misled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one, he will offend another: those that are not favoured will think themselves injured; and, since favours can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always discontented."

"The discontent," said the princess, "which is thus unreasonable, I hope that I shall always have spirit to despise, and you power to repress."

“Discontent,” answered Rasselas, “will not always be without reason under the most just and vigilant administration of public affairs. None, however attentive, can always discover that merit which indigence or faction may happen to obscure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet he that sees inferior desert advanced above him, will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice: and, indeed, it can scarcely be hoped that any man, however magnanimous by nature, or exalted by condition, will be able to persist for ever in the fixed and inexorable justice of distribution: he will sometimes indulge his own affections, and sometimes those of his favourites; he will permit some to please him who can never serve him; he will discover in those whom he loves qualities which in reality they do not possess; and to those from whom he receives pleasure, he will in his turn endeavour to give it. Thus will recommendations sometimes prevail which were purchased by money, or by the more destructive bribery of flattery and servility.

“He that has much to do will do something wrong, and of that wrong must suffer the consequences; and if it were possible that he should always act rightly, yet when such numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will censure and obstruct him by malevolence, and the good sometimes by mistake.

“The highest stations cannot therefore hope to be the abodes of happiness, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to seats of humble privacy and placid obscurity. For

what can hinder the satisfaction, or intercept the expectations of him whose abilities are adequate to his employments, who sees with his own eyes the whole circuit of his influence, who chooses by his own knowledge all whom he trusts, and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous and to be happy."

"Whether perfect happiness would be procured by perfect goodness," said Nekayah, "this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at least, may be maintained, that we do not always find visible happiness in proportion to visible virtue. All natural, and almost all political, evils are incident alike to the bad and good; they are confounded in the misery of a famine, and not much distinguished in the fury of a faction; they sink together in a tempest, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All their virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, a steady prospect of a happier state; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience, but remember that patience must suppose pain."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*RASSELAS AND NEKAYAH CONTINUE THEIR  
CONVERSATION.*

"DEAR princess," said Rasselas, "you fall into the common errors of exaggeratory declamation, by producing in a familiar disquisition examples of national calamities, and scenes of extensive misery, which are found in books rather than in the world, and which, as they are horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by misrepresentations. I cannot bear that querulous eloquence which threatens every city with a siege like that of Jerusalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locusts, and suspends pestilence on the wing of every blast that issues from the south.

"On necessary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all disputation is vain: when they happen they must be endured. But it is evident, that these bursts of universal distress are more dreaded than felt; thousands and ten thousands flourish in youth, and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domestic evils, and share the same pleasures and vexations, whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their country pursue their enemies or retreat before them. While

courts are disturbed with intestine competitions, and ambassadors are negotiating in foreign countries, the smith still plies his anvil, and the husbandman drives his plough forward; the necessities of life are required and obtained; and the successive business of the seasons continues to make its wonted revolutions.

“Let us cease to consider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it shall happen, will laugh at human speculation. We will not endeavour to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the destiny of kingdoms. It is our business to consider what beings like us may perform; each labouring for his own happiness, by promoting within his circle, however narrow, the happiness of others.

“Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature; men and women are made to be companions of each other, and therefore I cannot be persuaded but that marriage is one of the means of happiness.”

“I know not,” said the princess, “whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human misery. When I see and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected causes of lasting discord, the diversities of temper, the oppositions of opinion, the rude collisions of contrary desire where both are urged by violent impulses, the obstinate contests of disagreeable virtues where both are supported by consciousness of good intention, I am sometimes disposed to think with the severer casuists of most nations, that marriage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the instigation of a passion too much indulged, entangle themselves with indissoluble compacts.”

"You seem to forget," replied Rasselas, "that you have, even now, represented celibacy as less happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worst. Thus it happens when wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually destroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth."

"I did not expect," answered the princess, "to hear that imputed to falsehood which is the consequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare, with exactness, objects vast in their extent, and various in their parts. When we see or conceive the whole at once, we readily note the discriminations, and decide the preference: but of two systems, of which neither *can* be surveyed by any human being in its full compass, of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder that, judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other, as either presses on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourselves just as we differ from each other, when we see only part of the question, as in the multifarious relations of politics and morality: but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion."

"Let us not add," said the prince, "to the other evils of life, the bitterness of controversy, nor endeavour to vie with each other in subtleties of argument. We are employed in a search of which both are equally to enjoy the success, or suffer by the miscarriage. It is therefore fit that we assist each

other. You surely conclude too hastily from the infelicity of marriage against its institution; will not the misery of life prove equally that life cannot be the gift of heaven? The world must be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it."

"How the world is to be peopled," returned Nekayah, "is not my care, and needs not be yours. I see no danger that the present generation should omit to leave successors behind them: we are not now inquiring for the world, but for ourselves."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

*THE DEBATE OF MARRIAGE CONTINUED.*

“THE good of the whole,” said Rasselas, “is the same with the good of all its parts. If marriage be best for mankind, it must be evidently best for individuals, or a permanent and necessary duty must be the cause of evil, and some must be inevitably sacrificed to the convenience of others. In the estimate *which* you have made of the two states, it appears that the incommodities of a single life are, in a great measure, necessary and certain, but those of the conjugal state accidental and avoidable.

“I cannot forbear to flatter myself, that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cause of general complaint. What can be expected but disappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions, similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment ?

“Such is the common process of marriage. A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another. Having

little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry, and discover what nothing but voluntary blindness before had concealed: they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

"From those early marriages proceeds likewise the rivalry of parents and children: the son is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing to forsake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wish for the absence of the other.

"Surely all these evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence prescribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleasures, life may be well enough supported without the help of a partner. Longer time will increase experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and selection: one advantage, at least, will be certain—the parents will be visibly older than their children."

"What reason cannot collect," said Nekayah, "and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a question too important to be neglected, and I have often proposed it to those whose accuracy of remark and comprehensiveness of knowledge made their suffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined that it is dangerous for a man and woman to suspend their fate upon each other at a

time when opinions are fixed, and habits are established; when friendships have been contracted on both sides, when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own prospects.

“It is scarcely possible that two, travelling through the world under the conduct of chance, should have been both directed to the same path, and it will not often happen that either will quit the track which custom has made pleasing. When the desultory levity of youth has settled into regularity, it is soon succeeded by pride ashamed to yield, or obstinacy delighted to contend. And even though mutual esteem produces mutual desire to please, time itself, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewise the direction of the passion, and gives an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long customs are not easily broken: he that attempts to change the course of his own life, very often labours in vain; and how shall we do that for others, which we are seldom able to do for ourselves?”

“But surely,” interposed the prince, “you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason?”

“Thus it is,” said Nekayah, “that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide: questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. Consider the state of mankind, and inquire how few can be supposed to act upon any occasions,

whether small or great, with all the reasons of action present to their minds. Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason, every morning, all the minute detail of a domestic day.

“Those who marry at an advanced age, will probably escape the encroachments of their children, but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpless, to a guardian’s mercy: or, if that should not happen, they must at least go out of the world before they see those whom they love best either wise or great.

“From their children, if they have less to fear, they have less also to hope; and they lose, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the convenience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds susceptible of new impressions, which might wear away their dissimilitudes by long cohabitation, as soft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their surfaces to each other.

“I believe it will be found that those who marry late are best pleased with their children, and those who marry early with their partners.”

“The union of these two affections,” said Rasselas, “would produce all that could be wished. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them; a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the husband.”

“Every hour,” answered the princess, “confirms my prejudice in favour of the position so often uttered by the mouth of Imlac, ‘That nature sets her gifts on the right hand and on the left.’ Those conditions

which flatter hope and attract desire are so constituted, that as we approach one we recede from another. There are goods so opposed that we cannot seize both, but, by too much prudence, may pass between them at too great a distance to reach either. This is often the fate of long consideration; he does nothing who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourself with contrarieties of pleasure. Of the blessings set before you make your choice and be content. No man can taste the fruits of autumn while he is delighting his scent with the flowers of the spring: no man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile."

## CHAPTER XXX.

*IMLAC ENTERS, AND CHANGES THE  
CONVERSATION.*

HERE Imlac entered, and interrupted them. "Imlac," said Rasselas, "I have been taking from the princess the dismal history of private life, and am almost discouraged from further search."

"It seems to me," said Imlac, "that while you are making the choice of life you neglect to live. You wander about a single city, which, however large and diversified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestic life.

"The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power, before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders, and from the wonders which time has spared, we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed."

"My curiosity," said Rasselas, "does not very

strongly lead me to survey piles of stone or mounds of earth ; my business is with man. I came hither not to measure fragments of temples or trace choked aqueducts, but to look upon the various scenes of the present world."

"The things that are now before us," said the princess, "require attention, and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes, or the monuments of ancient times ? with times which never can return, and heroes whose form of life was different from all that the present condition of mankind requires or allows ?"

"To know anything," returned the poet, "we must know its effects ; to see men we must see their works, that we may learn what reason has dictated, or passion has incited, and find what are the most powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the present, we must oppose it to the past : for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present : recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments. Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief the past is the object, and the future of hope and fear ; even love and hatred respect the past, for the cause must have been before the effect.

"The present state of things is the consequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire what were the sources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent : if we are entrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Ignorance,



when it is voluntary, is criminal ; and he may properly be charged with evil who refused to learn how he might prevent it.

“There is no part of history so generally useful as that which relates to the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resuscitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invasions are peculiarly the business of princes, the useful or elegant arts are not to be neglected ; those who have kingdoms to govern have understandings to cultivate.

“Example is always more efficacious than precept. A soldier is formed in war, and a painter must copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage : great actions are seldom seen, but the labours of art are always at hand for those who desire to know what art has been able to perform.

“When the eye or the imagination is struck with any uncommon work, the next transition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true use of such contemplation ; we enlarge our comprehension by new ideas, and perhaps recover some art lost to mankind, or learn what is less perfectly known in our own country. At least we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the first motion towards good, discover our defects.”

“I am willing,” said the prince, “to see all that can deserve my search.” “And I,” said the princess,

“shall rejoice to learn something of the manners of antiquity.”

“The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry,” said Imlac, “are the Pyramids ; fabrics raised before the time of history, and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these the greatest is still standing, very little injured by time.”

“Let us visit them to-morrow,” said Nekayah. “I have often heard of the Pyramids, and shall not rest till I have seen them within and without with my own eyes.”

## CHAPTER XXXI.

*THEY VISIT THE PYRAMIDS.*

THE resolution being thus taken, they set out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being resolved to stay among the Pyramids till their curiosity was fully satisfied. They travelled gently, turned aside to everything remarkable, stopped from time to time and conversed with the inhabitants, and observed the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great pyramid, they were astonished at the extent of the base and the height of the top. Imlac explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidal form was chosen for a fabric intended to co-extend its duration with that of the world : he showed that its gradual diminution gave it such stability as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could scarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themselves, the least resistible of natural violence. A concussion that should shatter the pyramid would threaten the dissolution of the continent.

They measured all its dimensions, and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interior apartments ; and, having hired the

common guides, climbed up to the first passage, when the favourite of the princess, looking into the cavity, stepped back and trembled. "Pekuah," said the princess, "of what art thou afraid?" "Of the narrow entrance," answered the lady, "and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which must surely be inhabited by unquiet souls. The original possessors of those dreadful vaults will start up before us, and perhaps shut us in for ever." She spoke, and threw her arms round the neck of her mistress.

'If all your fear be of apparitions,' said the prince, "I will promise you safety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be seen no more."

"That the dead are seen no more," said Imlac, "I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence, and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears."

"Yet I do not mean to add new terrors to those which have already seized upon Pekuah. There can be no reason why spectres should haunt the pyramid more than other places, or why they should have power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our



THEY VISIT THE PYRAMIDS.



entrance is no violation of their privileges ; we can take nothing from them, how then can we offend them ? ”

“ My dear Pekuah,” said the princess, “ I will always go before you, and Imlac shall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the princess of Abyssinia.”

“ If the princess is pleased that her servant should die,” returned the lady, “ let her command some death less dreadful than enclosure in this horrid cavern. You know I dare not disobey you : I must go if you command me ; but, if I once enter, I never shall come back.”

The princess saw that her fear was too strong for expostulation or reproof ; and embracing her, told her that she should stay in the tent till her return. Pekuah was yet not satisfied, but entreated the princess not to pursue so dreadful a purpose as that of entering the recesses of the pyramid. “ Though I cannot teach courage,” said Nekayah, “ I must not learn cowardice ; nor leave at last undone what I came hither only to do.”



## CHAPTER XXXII.

*THEY ENTER THE PYRAMID.*

PEKUAH descended to the tents, and the rest entered the pyramid : they passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the chest in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been repositied. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers to rest awhile, before they attempted to return.

“We have now,” said Imlac, “gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China.

“Of the wall it is very easy to assign the motive. It secured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incursions of barbarians, whose unskilfulness in arts made it easier for them to supply their wants by rapine than by industry, and who from time to time poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce as vultures descend upon domestic fowl. Their celebrity and fierceness made the wall necessary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

“But for the Pyramids no reason has ever been given, adequate to the cost and labour of the work. The narrowness of the chamber proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treasures might

have been repositied at far less expense with equal security. It seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life, and must be always appeased by some employment. Those who have already all that they can enjoy must enlarge their desires. He that has built for use, till use is supplied, must begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmost power of human performance, that he may not be soon reduced to form another wish.

“I consider this mighty structure as a monument of the insufficiency of human enjoyments. A king, whose power is unlimited, and whose treasures surmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to solace, by the erection of a pyramid, the satiety of dominion and tastelessness of pleasures, and to amuse the tediousness of declining life, by seeing thousands labouring without end, and one stone for no purpose laid upon another. Whoever thou art, that, not content with a moderate condition, imaginest happiness in royal magnificence, and drestest that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty with perpetual gratifications, survey the Pyramids and confess thy folly!”

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

*THE PRINCESS MEETS WITH AN UNEXPECTED MISFORTUNE.*

THEY rose up and returned through the cavity at which they had entered, and the princess prepared for her favourite a long narrative of dark labyrinths and costly rooms, and of the different impressions which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But when they came to their train, they found every one silent and dejected; the men discovered shame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in their tents.

What had happened, they did not try to conjecture, but immediately inquired. "You had scarcely entered into the pyramid," said one of the attendants, "when a troop of Arabs rushed upon us: we were too few to resist them, and too slow to escape. They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen put them to flight; but they seized the lady Pekuah, with her two maids, and carried them away; the Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them."

The princess was overpowered with surprise and

grief. Rasselas, in the first heat of his resentment, ordered his servants to follow him, and prepared to pursue the robbers with his sabre in his hand. "Sir," said Imlac, "what can you hope from violence or valour? the Arabs are mounted on horses trained to battle and retreat; we have only beasts of burden. By leaving our present station we may lose the princess, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah."

In a short time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princess burst out into new lamentations, and Rasselas could scarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion that the escape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for perhaps they would have killed their captives rather than have resigned them.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

*THEY RETURN TO CAIRO WITHOUT PEKUAH.*

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer stay. They returned to Cairo, repenting of their curiosity, censuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own rashness, which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients by which the loss of Pekuah might have been prevented, and resolving to do something for her recovery, though none could find anything proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her by telling her that all had their troubles, and that Lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happiness in the world for a long time, and might reasonably expect a change of fortune. They hoped that some good would befall her wheresoever she was, and that their mistress would find another friend who might supply her place.

The princess made them no answer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was lost.

Next day the prince presented to the Bassa a memorial of the wrong which he had suffered, and a petition for redress. The Bassa threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch

them, nor indeed could any account or description be given by which he might direct the pursuit.

It soon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors being accustomed to hear of more crimes than they can punish, and more wrongs than they can redress, set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence, and presently forget the request when they lose sight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavoured to gain some intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the Arabs, and to regular correspondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of these, some were furnished with money for their journey, and came back no more; some were liberally paid for accounts which a few days discovered to be false. But the princess would not suffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While she was doing something, she kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was suggested; when one messenger returned unsuccessful, another was despatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now passed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard; the hopes which they had endeavoured to raise in each other grew more languid, and the princess, when she saw nothing more to be tried, sunk down inconsolable in hopeless dejection. A thousand times she reproached herself with the easy compliance by which she permitted her favourite to stay behind her. "Had not my fondness," said she, "lessened my authority, Pekuah had not dared to talk of her terrors. She ought to have feared me

more than spectres. A severe look would have overpowered her ; a peremptory command would have compelled obedience. Why did foolish indulgence prevail upon me ? Why did I not speak, and refuse to hear ? ”

“ Great princess,” said Imlac, “ do not reproach yourself for your virtue, or consider that as blamable by which evil has accidentally been caused. Your tenderness for the timidity of Pekuah was generous and kind. When we act according to our duty, we commit the event to Him by whose laws our actions are governed, and who will suffer none to be finally punished for obedience. When, in prospect of some good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules prescribed us, we withdraw from the direction of superior wisdom, and take all consequences upon ourselves. Man cannot so far know the connection of causes and events as that he may venture to do wrong in order to do right. When we pursue our end by lawful means, we may always console our miscarriage by the hope of future recompense. When we consult only our own policy, and attempt to find a nearer way to good, by overleaping the settled boundaries of right and wrong, we cannot be happy even by success, because we cannot escape the consciousness of our fault ; but, if we miscarry, the disappointment is irremediably embittered. How comfortless is the sorrow of him who feels at once the pangs of guilt, and the vexation of calamity which guilt has brought upon him !

“ Consider, princess, what would have been your condition, if the Lady Pekuah had entreated to



accompany you, and, being compelled to stay in the tents, had been carried away ; or how would you have borne the thought, if you had forced her into the pyramid, and she had died before you in agonies of terror ? ”

“ Had either happened,” said Nekayah, “ I could not have endured life till now ; I should have been tortured to madness by the remembrance of such cruelty, or must have pined away in abhorrence of myself.”

“ This at least,” said Imlac, “ is the present reward of virtuous conduct, that no unlucky consequence can oblige us to repent it.”

## CHAPTER XXXV.

*THE PRINCESS LANGUISHES FOR WANT OF  
PEKUAH.*

NEKAYAH being thus reconciled to herself, found that no evil is insupportable but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong. She was from that time delivered from the violence of tempestuous sorrow, and sunk into silent pensiveness and gloomy tranquillity. She sat from morning to evening recollecting all that had been done or said by her Pekuah, treasured up with care every trifle on which Pekuah had set an accidental value, and which might recall to mind any little incident or careless conversation. The sentiments of her, whom she now expected to see no more, were treasured in her memory as rules of life, and she deliberated to no other end than to conjecture on any occasion what would have been the opinion and counsel of Pekuah.

The women by whom she was attended knew nothing of her real condition, and therefore she could not talk to them but with caution and reserve. She began to remit her curiosity, having no great care to collect notions which she had no convenience of uttering. Rasselas endeavoured first to comfort, and

afterwards to divert her; he hired musicians, to whom she seemed to listen, but did not hear them; and procured masters to instruct her in various arts, whose lectures, when they visited her again, were again to be repeated. She had lost her taste of pleasure, and her ambition of excellence. And her mind, though forced into short excursions, always recurred to the image of her friend.

Imlac was every morning earnestly enjoined to renew his inquiries, and was asked every night whether he had yet heard of Pekuah, till, not being able to return the princess the answer that she desired, he was less and less willing to come into her presence. She observed his backwardness, and commanded him to attend her. "You are not," said she, "to confound impatience with resentment, or to suppose that I charge you with negligence, because I repine at your unsuccessfulness. I do not much wonder at your absence; I know that the unhappy are never pleasing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of misery. To hear complaints is wearisome alike to the wretched and the happy; for who would cloud, by adventitious grief, the short gleams of gaiety which life allows us? or who, that is struggling under his own evils, will add to them the miseries of another?"

"The time is at hand, when none shall be disturbed any longer by the sighs of Nekayah; my search after happiness is now at an end. I am resolved to retire from the world with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myself in solitude, without any other care than to compose my thoughts, and regulate my

hours by a constant succession of innocent occupations, till, with a mind purified from all earthly desires, I shall enter into that state to which all are hastening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendship of Pekuah."

"Do not entangle your mind," said Imlac, "by irrevocable determinations, nor increase the burden of life by a voluntary accumulation of misery: the weariness of retirement will continue or increase when the loss of Pekuah is forgotten. That you have been deprived of one pleasure is no very good reason for rejection of the rest."

"Since Pekuah was taken from me," said the princess, "I have no pleasure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or trust has little to hope. She wants the radical principle of happiness. We may perhaps allow, that what satisfaction this world can afford, must arise from the conjunction of wealth, knowledge, and goodness: wealth is nothing but as it is bestowed, and knowledge nothing but as it is communicated: they must therefore be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them? Goodness affords the only comfort which can be enjoyed without a partner, and goodness may be practised in retirement."

"How far solitude may admit goodness, or advance it, I shall not," replied Imlac, "dispute at present. Remember the confession of the pious hermit. You will wish to return into the world, when the image of your companion has left your thoughts."

"That time," said Nekayah, "will never come. The generous frankness, the modest obsequiousness,

and the faithful secrecy of my dear Pekuah, will always be more missed as I shall live longer to see vice and folly."

"The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity," said Imlac, "is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new-created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled; yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either; but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation. Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye; and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion; commit yourself again to the current of the world: Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation."

"At least," said the prince, "do not despair before all remedies have been tried; the inquiry after the unfortunate lady is still continued, and shall be carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition

that you will promise to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable resolution."

Nekayah thought this a reasonable demand, and made the promise to her brother, who had been advised by Imlac to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah; but he supposed that if he could secure the interval of a year, the princess would be then in no danger of a cloister.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

*PEKUAH IS STILL REMEMBERED. THE PROGRESS  
OF SORROW.*

NEKAYAH, seeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favourite, and having, by her promise, set her intention of retirement at a distance, began imperceptibly to return to common cares and common pleasures. She rejoiced, without her own consent, at the suspension of her sorrows, and sometimes caught herself with indignation in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her, whom yet she resolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondness of Pekuah, and for some weeks retired constantly at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes swollen and her countenance clouded. By degrees she grew less scrupulous, and suffered any important and pressing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to less occasions, sometimes forgot what she was indeed afraid to remember, and at last wholly released herself from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was yet not diminished. A thousand occurrences brought her back to memory



and a thousand wants, which nothing but the confidence of friendship can supply, made her frequently regretted. She therefore solicited Imlac never to desist from inquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that at least she might have the comfort of knowing that she did not suffer by negligence or sluggishness. "Yet what," said she, "is to be expected from our pursuit of happiness, when we find the state of life to be such, that happiness itself is the cause of misery? Why should we endeavour to attain that of which the possession cannot be secured? I shall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondness, however tender, lest I should lose again what I have lost in Pekuah."

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

*THE PRINCESS HEARS NEWS OF PEKUAH.*

IN seven months, one of the messengers who had been sent away upon the day when the promise was drawn from the princess, returned, after many unsuccessful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hand of an Arab chief, who possessed a castle or fortress on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whose revenue was plunder, was willing to restore her, with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The price was no subject of debate. The princess was in ecstasies when she heard that her favourite was alive, and might so cheaply be ransomed. She could not think of delaying for a moment Pekuah's happiness or her own, but entreated her brother to send back the messenger with the sum required. Imlac being consulted, was not very confident of the veracity of the relater, and was still more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally trusted, detain at once the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themselves in the power of the Arab by going into his district, and could not expect that the rover would so much expose himself as to come into the lower country, where he might be seized by the forces of the Bassa.

It is difficult to negotiate where neither will trust. But Imlac, after some deliberation, directed the messenger to propose that Pekuah should be conducted by ten horsemen to the monastery of St. Antony, which is situated in the deserts of Upper Egypt, where she should be met by the same number, and her ransom should be paid.

That no time might be lost, as they expected that the proposal would not be refused, they immediately began their journey to the monastery, and when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former messenger to the Arab's fortress. Rasselas was desirous to go with them ; but neither his sister nor Imlac would consent. The Arab, according to the custom of his nation, observed the laws of hospitality with great exactness to those who put themselves into his power, and in a few days brought Pekuah with her maids, by easy journeys, to the place appointed, where, receiving the stipulated price, he restored her with great respect to liberty and her friends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princess and her favourite embraced each other with transport too violent to be expressed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderness in secret, and exchange professions of kindness and gratitude. After a few hours they returned into the refectory of the convent, where, in the presence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required of Pekuah the history of her adventures.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

*THE ADVENTURES OF THE LADY PEKUAH.*

“AT what time and in what manner I was forced away,” said Pekuah, “your servants have told you. The suddenness of the event struck me with surprise, and I was at first rather stupefied than agitated with any passion of either fear or sorrow. My confusion was increased by the speed and tumult of our flight, while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it seemed, soon despaired to overtake us, or were afraid of those whom they made a show of menacing.

“When the Arabs saw themselves out of danger they slackened their course, and as I was less harassed by external violence, I began to feel more uneasiness in my mind. After some time we stopped near a spring shaded with trees in a pleasant meadow, where we were set upon the ground, and offered such refreshments as our masters were partaking. I was suffered to sit with my maids apart from the rest, and none attempted to comfort or insult us. Here I first began to feel the full weight of my misery. The girls sat weeping in silence, and from time to time looked on me for succour. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or whence to

draw any hope of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers and savages, and had no reason to suppose that their pity was more than their justice, or that they would forbear the gratification of any ardour of desire or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kissed my maids, and endeavoured to pacify them by remarking that we were yet treated with decency, and that since we were now carried beyond pursuit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

“When we were to be set again on horseback, my maids clung round me, and refused to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate those who had us in their power. We travelled the remaining part of the day through an unfrequented and pathless country, and came by moonlight to the side of a hill, where the rest of the troop was stationed. Their tents were pitched, and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed as a man much beloved by his dependants.

“We were received into a large tent, where we found women who had attended their husbands in the expedition. They set before us the supper which they had provided, and I ate rather to encourage my maids, than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away, they spread the carpets for repose. I was weary, and hoped to find in sleep that remission of distress which nature seldom denies. Ordering myself therefore to be undressed, I observed that the women looked very earnestly upon me, not expecting, I suppose, to see me so submissively attended. When my upper vest was taken off, they were apparently

struck with the splendour of my clothes, and one of them timorously laid her hand upon the embroidery. She then went out, and in a short time came back with another woman, who seemed to be of higher rank and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the usual act of reverence, and taking me by the hand, placed me in a smaller tent, spread with finer carpets, where I spent the night quietly with my maids.

“In the morning, as I was sitting on the grass, the chief of the troop came towards me. I rose up to receive him, and he bowed with great respect. ‘Illustrious lady,’ said he, ‘my fortune is better than I had presumed to hope: I am told by my women that I have a princess in my camp.’ ‘Sir,’ answered I, ‘your women have deceived themselves and you: I am not a princess, but an unhappy stranger, who intended soon to have left this country, in which I am now to be imprisoned for ever.’ ‘Whoever or whencesoever you are,’ returned the Arab, ‘your dress, and that of your servants, show your rank to be high and your wealth to be great. Why should you, who can so easily procure your ransom, think yourself in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpose of my incursions is to increase my riches, or, more properly, to gather tribute. The sons of Ishmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is usurped by late invaders and low-born tyrants, from whom we are compelled to take by the sword what is denied to justice. The violence of war admits no distinction; the lance that is lifted at guilt and power will sometimes fall on innocence and gentleness.’

“ ‘How little,’ said I, ‘did I expect that yesterday it should have fallen upon me!’

“ ‘Misfortunes,’ answered the Arab, ‘should always be expected. If the eye of hostility could learn reverence or pity, excellence like yours had been exempt from injury. But the angels of affliction spread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean. Do not be disconsolate: I am not one of the lawless and cruel rovers of the desert; I know the rules of civil life; I will fix your ransom, give a passport to your messenger, and perform my stipulation with nice punctuality.’

“You will easily believe that I was pleased with his courtesy; and finding that his predominant passion was desire of money, I began now to think my danger less, for I knew that no sum would be thought too great for the release of Pekuah. I told him that he should have no reason to charge me with ingratitude if I was used with kindness, and that any ransom which could be expected for a maid of common rank would be paid; but that he must not persist to rate me as a princess. He said he would consider what he should demand; and then smiling, bowed and retired.

“Soon after the women came about me, each contending to be more officious than the other, and my maids themselves were served with reverence. We travelled onward by short journeys. On the fourth day the chief told me that my ransom must be two hundred ounces of gold; which I not only promised him, but told him that I would add fifty more, if I and my maids were honourably treated.



“I never knew the power of gold before. From that time I was the leader of the troop. The march of every day was longer or shorter as I commanded, and the tents were pitched where I chose to rest. We now had camels and other conveniences for travel, my own women were always at my side, and I amused myself with observing the manners of the vagrant nations, and with viewing remains of ancient edifices, with which these deserted countries appear to have been, in some distant age, lavishly embellished.

“The chief of the band was a man far from illiterate ; he was able to travel by the stars or the compass, and had marked, in his erratic expeditions, such places as are most worthy the notice of a passenger. He observed to me, that buildings are always best preserved in places little frequented and difficult of access ; for when once a country declines from its primitive splendour, the more inhabitants are left, the quicker ruin will be made. Walls supply stones more easily than quarries, and palaces and temples will be demolished to make stables of granite and cottages of porphyry !”

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

*THE ADVENTURES OF PEKUAH CONTINUED.*

“WE wandered about in this manner for some weeks, whether, as our chief pretended, for my gratification, or, as I rather suspected, for some convenience of his own. I endeavoured to appear contented, where sullenness and resentment would have been of no use, and that endeavour conduced much to the calmness of my mind; but my heart was always with Nekayah, and the troubles of the night much overbalanced the amusements of the day. My women, who threw all their cares upon their mistress, set their minds at ease from the time when they saw me treated with respect, and gave themselves up to the incidental alleviations of our fatigue without solicitude or sorrow. I was pleased with their pleasure, and animated with their confidence. My condition had lost much of its terror since I found that the Arab ranged the country merely to get riches. Avarice is a uniform and tractable vice; other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind; that which soothes the pride of one will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous there is a ready way; bring money, and nothing is denied.

“At last we came to the dwelling of our chief, a strong and spacious house built with stone, in an island of the Nile, which lies, as I was told, under the tropic. ‘Lady,’ said the Arab, ‘you shall rest after your journey a few weeks in this place, where you are to consider yourself as sovereign. My occupation is war; I have therefore chosen this obscure residence, from which I can issue unexpected, and to which I can retire unpursued. You may now repose in security: here are few pleasures, but here is no danger.’ He then led me into the inner apartments, and seating me on the richest couch, bowed to the ground. His women, who considered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but being soon informed that I was a great lady detained only for my ransom, they began to vie with each other in obsequiousness and reverence.

“Being again comforted with new assurances of speedy liberty, I was for some days diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great distance, and afforded a view of many windings of the stream. In the day I wandered from one place to another, as the course of the sun varied the splendour of the prospect, and saw many things which I had never seen before. The crocodiles and river-horses are common in this unpeopled region, and I often looked upon them with terror, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For some time I expected to see mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told me, the European travellers have stationed in the Nile; but no such beings ever appeared, and the

Arab, when I inquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

“At night the Arab always attended me to a tower set apart for celestial observations, where he endeavoured to teach me the names and courses of the stars. I had no great inclination to this study, but an appearance of attention was necessary to please my instructor, who valued himself for his skill; and in a little while I found some employment requisite to beguile the tediousness of time which was to be passed always amidst the same objects. I was weary of looking in the morning on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening; I therefore was at last willing to observe the stars rather than do nothing, but could not always compose my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah when others imagined me contemplating the sky. Soon after, the Arab went upon another expedition, and then my only pleasure was to talk with my maids about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happiness that we should all enjoy at the end of our captivity.”

“There were women in your Arab’s fortress,” said the princess; “why did you not make them companions, enjoy their conversation, and partake their diversions? In a place where they found business or amusement, why should you alone sit corroded with idle melancholy? or why could not you bear, for a few months, that condition to which they were condemned for life?”

“The diversions of the women,” answered Pekuah, “were only childish play by which the mind, accus-

tomed to stronger operations, could not be kept busy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely sensitive, whilst my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran from room to room, as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the sake of motion, as lambs frisk in a meadow. One sometimes pretended to be hurt that the rest might be alarmed; or hid herself that another might seek her. Part of their time passed in watching the progress of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in marking the various forms into which the clouds broke in the sky.

“Their business was only needlework, in which I and my maids sometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will easily struggle from the fingers, nor will you suspect that captivity and absence from Nekayah could receive solace from silken flowers.

“Nor was much satisfaction to be hoped from their conversation; for of what could they be expected to talk? They had seen nothing; for they had lived from early youth in that narrow spot; of what they had not seen, they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and had hardly names for anything but their clothes and their food. As I bore a superior character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amused me to hear the complaints of each against the rest, I might have been often detained by long stories; but the motives of their animosity were so

small, that I could not listen without interrupting the tale."

"How," said Rasselas, "can the Arab, whom you represented as a man of more than common accomplishments, take any pleasure in his seraglio, when it is filled only with women like these? Are they exquisitely beautiful?"

"They do not," said Pekuah, "want that unaffected and ignoble beauty which may subsist without sprightliness or sublimity, without energy of thought, or dignity of virtue. But to a man like the Arab, such beauty was only a flower casually plucked and carelessly thrown away. Whatever pleasures he might find among them, they were not those of friendship or society. When they were playing about him, he looked at them with inattentive superiority; when they vied for his regard, he sometimes turned away disgusted. As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediousness of life; as they had no choice, their fondness, or appearance of fondness, excited in him neither pride nor gratitude; he was not exalted in his own esteem by the smiles of a woman who saw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard of which he could never know the sincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted, not so much to delight him as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careless distribution of superfluous time, such love as man can bestow upon that which he despises, such as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow."

"Ye have reason, lady, to think yourself happy,"

said Imlac, "that you have been thus easily dismissed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge, be willing, in an intellectual famine, to lose such a banquet as Pekuah's conversation?"

"I am inclined to believe," answered Pekuah, "that he was for some time in suspense; for, notwithstanding his promise, whenever I proposed to despatch a messenger to Cairo, he found some excuse for delay. While I was detained in his house, he made many incursions into the neighbouring countries, and perhaps he would have refused to discharge me had his plunder been equal to his wishes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my observations, and endeavoured to advance my acquaintance with the stars. When I importuned him to send away my letters, he soothed me with professions of honour and sincerity; and when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his absence. I was much afflicted by this studied procrastination, and was sometimes afraid that I should be forgotten; that you would leave Cairo, and I must end my days in an island of the Nile.

"I grew at last hopeless and dejected, and cared so little to entertain him, that he for a while more frequently talked with my maids. That he should fall in love with them or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleased with the growing friendship. My anxiety was not long; for as I recovered some degree of cheerfulness, he returned to me, and I could not forbear to despise my former uneasiness.



“He still delayed to send for my ransom, and would perhaps never have determined, had not your agent found his way to him. The gold which he would not fetch, he could not reject when it was offered. He hastened to prepare for our journey hither like a man delivered from an intestine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the house, who dismissed me with cold indifference.”

Nekayah, having heard her favourite's relation, rose and embraced her, and Rasselas gave her a hundred ounces of gold, which she presented to the Arab for the fifty that were promised.

## CHAPTER XL.

*THE HISTORY OF A MAN OF LEARNING.*

THEY returned to Cairo, and were so well pleased at finding themselves together, that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to love learning, and one day declared to Imlac that he intended to devote himself to science, and pass the rest of his days in literary solitude.

“Before you make your final choice,” answered Imlac, “you ought to examine its hazards, and converse with those who are grown old in the company of themselves. I have just left the observatory of one of the most learned astronomers in the world, who has spent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celestial bodies, and has drawn out his soul in endless calculations. He admits a few friends once a month to hear his deductions and enjoy his discoveries. I was introduced as a man of knowledge, worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas and fluent conversation are commonly welcome to those whose thoughts have been long fixed upon a single point, and who find the images of other things stealing away. I delighted him with my remarks; he smiled at the narrative of my travels; and was glad to forget the

constellations, and descend for a moment into the lower world.

“On the next day of vacation I renewed my visit, and was so fortunate as to please him again. He relaxed from that time the severity of this rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always busy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was desirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had every day more of his confidence, and always found new cause of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and retentive, his discourse is methodical, and his expression clear.

“His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepest researches and most favourite studies are willingly interrupted for any opportunity of doing good by his counsel or his riches. To his closest retreat, at his most busy moments, all are admitted that want his assistance: ‘For though I exclude idleness and pleasure, I will never,’ says he, ‘bar my doors against charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded.’”

“Surely,” said the princess, “this man is happy.”

“I visited him,” said Imlac, “with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamoured of his conversation: he was sublime without haughtiness, courteous without formality, and communicative without ostentation.

“I was at first, great princess, of your opinion,

thought him the happiest of mankind, and often congratulated him on the blessing that he enjoyed. He seemed to hear nothing with indifference but the praises of his condition, to which he always returned a general answer, and diverted the conversation to some other topic.

“Amidst this willingness to be pleased and labour to please, I had quickly reason to imagine that some painful sentiment pressed upon his mind. He often looked up earnestly towards the sun, and let his voice fall in the midst of his discourse. He would sometimes, when we were alone, gaze upon me in silence with the air of a man who longed to speak what he was yet resolved to suppress. He would often send for me with vehement injunctions of haste, though, when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to say; and sometimes, when I was leaving him, would call me back, pause a few moments, and then dismiss me.”

## CHAPTER XLI.

*THE ASTRONOMER DISCOVERS THE CAUSE OF HIS  
UNEASINESS.*

“AT last the time came when the secret burst his reserve. We were sitting together last night in the turret of his house, watching the emersion of a satellite of Jupiter. A sudden tempest clouded the sky, and disappointed our observation. We sat awhile silent in the dark, and then he addressed himself to me in these words: ‘Imlac, I have long considered thy friendship as the greatest blessing of my life. Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requisite for trust, benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long discharged an office which I must soon quit at the call of nature, and shall rejoice in the hour of imbecility and pain to devolve it upon thee.’

“I thought myself honoured by this testimony, and protested that whatever could conduce to his happiness would add likewise to mine.

“‘Hear, Imlac, what thou wilt not without difficulty credit. I have possessed for five years the regulation of the weather and the distribution of the seasons; the sun has listened to my dictates, and passed from

tropic to tropic by my direction ; the clouds, at my call, have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command ; I have restrained the rage of the dog-star, and mitigated the fervours of the crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have hitherto refused my authority, and multitudes have perished by equinoctial tempests, which I found myself unable to prohibit or restrain. I have administered this great office with exact justice, and made to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine. What must have been the misery of half the globe, if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the sun to either side of the equator ? ”

## CHAPTER XLII.

*THE OPINION OF THE ASTRONOMER IS EXPLAINED  
AND JUSTIFIED.*

“ I SUPPOSE he discovered in me, through the obscurity of the room, some tokens of amazement and doubt, for, after a short pause, he proceeded thus :—

“ ‘ Not to be easily credited will neither surprise nor offend me ; for I am, probably, the first of human beings to whom this trust has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem this distinction a reward or punishment ; since I have possessed it I have been far less happy than before, and nothing but the consciousness of good intention could have enabled me to support the weariness of unremitted vigilance.’

“ ‘ How long, sir,’ said I, ‘ has this great office been in your hands ?’

“ ‘ About ten years ago,’ said he, ‘ my daily observations of the changes of the sky led me to consider, whether, if I had the power of the seasons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation fastened on my mind, and I sat days and nights in imaginary dominion, pouring upon this country and that the showers of fertility, and seconding every fall of rain with a due proportion of sunshine. I had yet only the will to



do good, and did not imagine that I should ever have the power.

“‘One day, as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt in my mind a sudden wish that I could send rain on the southern mountains, and raise the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination I commanded rain to fall, and by comparing the time of my command with that of the inundation, I found that the clouds had listened to my lips.’

“‘Might not some other cause,’ said I, ‘produce this concurrence? the Nile does not always rise on the same day.’

“‘Do not believe,’ said he with impatience, ‘that such objections could escape me: I reasoned long against my own conviction, and laboured against truth with the utmost obstinacy. I sometimes suspected myself of madness, and should not have dared to impart this secret but to a man like you, capable of distinguishing the wonderful from the impossible, and the incredible from the false.’

“‘Why, sir,’ said I, ‘do you call that incredible which you know, or think you know, to be true?’

“‘Because,’ said he, ‘I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know too well the laws of demonstration to think that my conviction ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conscious of its force. I therefore shall not attempt to gain credit by disputation. It is sufficient that I feel this power, that I have long possessed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is short, the infirmities of age increase upon me, and the

time will soon come, when the regulator of the year must mingle with the dust. The care of appointing a successor has long disturbed me; the night and the day have been long spent in comparisons of all the characters which have come to my knowledge, and I have yet found none so worthy as thyself."

## CHAPTER XLIII.

*THE ASTRONOMER LEAVES IMLAC HIS DIRECTIONS.*

“HEAR, therefore, what I shall impart with attention, such as the welfare of a world requires. If the task of a king be considered as difficult, who has the care only of a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm, what must be the anxiety of him on whom depends the action of the elements, and the great gifts of light and heat!—Hear me therefore with attention.

“‘I have diligently considered the position of the earth and sun, and formed innumerable schemes in which I changed their situation. I have sometimes turned aside the axis of the earth, and sometimes varied the ecliptic of the sun: but I have found it impossible to make a disposition by which the world may be advantaged; what one region gains another loses by any imaginable alteration, even without considering the distant parts of the solar system with which we are unacquainted. Do not therefore, in thy administration of the year, indulge thy pride by innovation; do not please thyself with thinking that thou canst make thyself renowned to all future ages, by disordering the seasons. The memory of mischief is no desirable fame. Much

less will it become thee to let kindness or interest prevail. Never rob other countries of rain, to pour it on thine own. For us the Nile is sufficient.'

"I promised that, when I possessed the power, I would use it with inflexible integrity; and he dismissed me, pressing my hand. 'My heart,' said he, 'will be now at rest, and my benevolence will no more destroy my quiet; I have found a man of wisdom and virtue, to whom I can cheerfully bequeath the inheritance of the sun.'"

The prince heard this narration with very serious regard; but the princess smiled, and Pekuah convulsed herself with laughter. "Ladies," said Imlac, "to mock the heaviest of human afflictions is neither charitable nor wise. Few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practise his virtues; but all may suffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason."

The princess was recollected, and the favourite was abashed. Rasselas, more deeply affected, inquired of Imlac whether he thought such maladies of the mind frequent, and how they were contracted?

## CHAPTER XLIV.

*THE DANGEROUS PREVALENCE OF IMAGINATION.*

“DISORDERS of intellect,” answered Imlac, “happen much more often than superficial observers will easily believe. Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state. There is no man whose imagination does not sometimes predominate over his reason, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whose ideas will come and go at his command. No man will be found in whose mind airy notions do not sometimes tyrannise, and force him to hope or fear beyond the limits of sober probability. All power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity; but while this power is such as we can control and repress, it is not visible to others, nor considered as any depravation of the mental faculties: it is not pronounced madness but when it becomes ungovernable, and apparently influences speech or action.

“To indulge the power of fiction, and send imagination out upon the wing, is often the sport of those who delight too much in silent speculation. When we are alone we are not always busy;

the labour of excogitation is too violent to last long; the ardour of inquiry will sometimes give way to idleness or satiety. He who has nothing external that can divert him must find pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is? He then expatiates in boundless futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the present moment he should most desire, amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combinations, and riots in delights which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot bestow.

“In time, some particular train of ideas fixes the attention; all other intellectual gratifications are rejected; the mind, in weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favourite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious and in time despotic. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

“This, sir, is one of the dangers of solitude, which the hermit has confessed not always to promote goodness, and the astronomer’s misery has proved to be not always propitious to wisdom.”

“I will no more,” said the favourite, “imagine

myself the Queen of Abyssinia. I have often spent the hours which the princess gave to my own disposal, in adjusting ceremonies and regulating the court; I have repressed the pride of the powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces in more happy situations, planted groves upon the tops of the mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty; till, when the princess entered, I had almost forgotten to bow down before her."

"And I," said the princess, "will not allow myself any more to play the shepherdess in my waking dreams. I have often soothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of pastoral employments, till I have, in my chamber, heard the winds whistle, and the sheep bleat; sometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and sometimes with my crook encountered the wolf. I have a dress like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination; and a pipe on which I play softly, and suppose myself followed by my flocks."

"I will confess," said the prince, "an indulgence of fantastic delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavoured to imagine the possibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong should be restrained, all vice reformed, and all the subjects preserved in tranquillity and innocence. This thought produced innumerable schemes of reformation, and dictated many useful regulations and salutary edicts. This has been the sport, and sometimes the labour, of my solitude; and I start when I



think with how little anguish I once supposed the death of my father and my brothers."

"Such," says Imlac, "are the effects of visionary schemes; when we first form them we know them to be absurd, but familiarise them by degrees, and in time lose sight of their folly."

## CHAPTER XLV.

*THEY DISCOURSE WITH AN OLD MAN.*

THE evening was now far past, and they rose to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they saw at a small distance an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the assembly of the sages. "Yonder," said he, "is one whose years have calmed his passions, but not clouded his reason; let us close the disquisitions of the night by inquiring what are his sentiments of his own state, that we may know whether youth alone is to struggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life."

Here the sage approached, and saluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled awhile, as acquaintance that had unexpectedly met one another. The old man was cheerful and talkative, and the way seemed short in his company. He was pleased to find himself not disregarded, accompanied them to their house, and, at the prince's request, entered with them. They placed him in the seat of honour, and set wine and conserves before him.

"Sir," said the princess, "an evening walk must give to a man of learning, like you, pleasures which

ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and causes of all that you behold, the laws by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Everything must supply you with contemplation, and renew the consciousness of your own dignity."

"Lady," answered he, "let the gay and the vigorous expect pleasure in their excursions; it is enough that age can obtain ease. To me the world has lost its novelty; I look round, and see what I remember to have seen in happier days. I rest against a tree, and consider that in the same shade I once disputed upon the annual overflow of the Nile, with a friend who is now silent in the grave. I cast my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think with pain on the vicissitudes of life. I have ceased to take much delight in physical truth; for what have I to do with those things which I am soon to leave?"

"You may at least recreate yourself," said Imlac, "with recollection of an honourable and useful life, and enjoy the praise which all agree to give you."

"Praise," said the sage, with a sigh, "is to an old man an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals. Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my interest beyond myself. Youth is delighted with applause, because it is considered as the earnest of some future good, and because the prospect of life is far extended; but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is

little to be feared from the malevolence of men, and yet less to be hoped from their affection or esteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be useless, and high employment would be pain. My retrospect of life recalls to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much time squandered upon trifles, and more lost in idleness and vacancy. I leave many great designs unattempted, and many great attempts unfinished. My mind is burdened with no heavy crime, and therefore I compose myself to tranquillity; endeavour to abstract my thoughts from hopes and cares which, though reason knows them to be vain, still try to keep their old possession of the heart; expect with serene humility that hour which nature cannot long delay; and hope to possess, in a better state, that happiness which here I could not find, and that virtue which here I have not attained."

He rose and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince consoled himself with remarking, that it was not reasonable to be disappointed by this account; for age had never been considered as the season of felicity; and if it was possible to be easy in decline and weakness, it was likely that the days of vigour and alacrity might be happy; that the noon of life might be bright, if the evening could be calm.

The princess suspected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repress the expectations of those who had newly entered the world. She had seen the possessors of estates look with envy on their heirs, and known many who enjoyed

pleasure no longer than they could confine it to themselves.

Pekuah conjectured that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his complaints to delirious dejection; or else supposed that he had been unfortunate, and was therefore discontented: "For nothing," said she, "is more common, than to call our own condition the condition of life."

Imlac, who had no desire to see them depressed, smiled at the comforts which they could so readily procure to themselves, and remember, that at the same age he was equally confident of unmingled prosperity, and equally fertile of consolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itself would too soon impress. The princess and her lady retired; the madness of the astronomer hung upon their minds, and they desired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning the rising of the sun.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

*THE PRINCESS AND PEKUAH VISIT THE  
ASTRONOMER.*

THE princess and Pekuah having talked in private of Imlac's astronomer, thought his character at once so amiable and so strange, that they could not be satisfied without a nearer knowledge; and Imlac was requested to find the means of bringing them together.

This was somewhat difficult; the philosopher had never received any visits from women, though he lived in a city that had in it many Europeans, who followed the manners of their own countries, and many from other parts of the world, that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refused, and several schemes were proposed for the accomplishment of their design. It was proposed to introduce them as strangers in distress, to whom the sage was always accessible: but, after some deliberation, it appeared that, by this artifice, no acquaintance could be formed, for their conversation would be short, and they could not decently importune him often. "This," said Rasselas, "is true; but I have yet a stronger objection against the misrepresentation of your state. I have always considered it as treason against the

great republic of human nature to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him, whether on great or little occasions. All imposture weakens confidence, and chills benevolence. When the sage finds that you are not what you seemed, he will feel the resentment natural to a man who, conscious of great abilities, discovers that he has been tricked by understandings meaner than his own; and perhaps the distrust which he can never afterwards wholly lay aside, may stop the voice of counsel, and close the hand of charity; and where will you find the power of restoring his benefactions to mankind, or his peace to himself?"

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curiosity would subside; but, next day, Pekuah told him she had now found an honest pretence for a visit to the astronomer, for she would solicit permission to continue under him the studies in which she had been initiated by the Arab, and the princess might go with her either as a fellow-student, or because a woman could not decently come alone. "I am afraid," said Imlac, "that he will be soon weary of your company; men advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art; and I am not certain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them connected with inferences, and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditress." "That," said Pekuah, "must be my care; I ask of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it, and, by concurring always with his opinions, I shall make him think it greater than it is."

The astronomer, in pursuance of this resolution,



was told that a foreign lady, travelling in search of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was desirous to become his scholar. The uncommonness of the proposal raised at once his surprise and curiosity; and when, after a short deliberation, he consented to admit her, he could not stay without impatience till the next day.

The ladies dressed themselves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the astronomer, who was pleased to see himself approached with respect by persons of so splendid an appearance. In the exchange of the first civilities he was timorous and bashful; but when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and justified the character which Imlac had given. Inquiring of Pekuah what could have turned her inclination towards astronomy, he received from her a history of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time passed at the Arab's Island. She told her tale with ease and elegance, and her conversation took possession of his heart. The discourse was then turned to astronomy: Pekuah displayed what she knew; he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and entreated her not to desist from a study which she had so happily begun.

They came again and again, and were every time more welcome than before. The sage endeavoured to amuse them, that they might prolong their visits, for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company; the clouds of solicitude vanished by degrees, as he forced himself to entertain them, and he grieved when he was left at their departure to his old employment of regulating the seasons.

The princess and her favourite had now watched his lips for several months, and could not catch a word from which they could judge whether he continued or not in the opinion of his preternatural commission. They often contrived to bring him to an open declaration; but he easily eluded all their attacks, and on which side soever they pressed him, escaped from them to some other topic.

As their familiarity increased they invited him often to the house of Imlac, where they distinguished him by extraordinary respect. He began gradually to delight in sublunary pleasures. He came early and departed late; laboured to recommend himself by assiduity and compliance; excited their curiosity after new arts, that they might still want his assistance; and when they made any excursion of pleasure or inquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wisdom, the prince and his sister were convinced that he might be trusted without danger; and, lest he should draw any false hopes from the civilities which he received, discovered to him their condition, with the motives of their journey; and required his opinion on the choice of life.

“Of the various conditions which the world spreads before you, which you shall prefer,” said the sage, “I am not able to instruct you. I can only tell that I have chosen wrong. I have passed my time in study without experience; in the attainment of sciences, which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expense of all the common comforts of life; I have

missed the endearing elegance of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestic tenderness. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other students, they have been accompanied with fear, disquiet, and scrupulosity; but even of these prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, since my thoughts have been diversified by more intercourse with the world, begun to question the reality. When I have been for a few days lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in error, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain."

Imlac was delighted to find that the sage's understanding was breaking through its mists, and resolved to detain him from the planets till he should forget his task of ruling them, and reason should recover its original influence.

From this time the astronomer was received into familiar friendship, and partook of all their projects and pleasures; his respect kept him attentive, and the activity of Rasselas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always to be done; the day was spent in making observations which furnished talk for the evening, and the evening was closed with a scheme for the morrow.

The sage confessed to Imlac that since he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his authority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found subject to variation, from

causes in which reason had no part. "If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours," said he, "my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence; but they are soon disentangled by the prince's conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark; yet, if his lamp be extinguished, feels again the terrors which he knows that when it is light he shall feel no more. But I am sometimes afraid lest I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am entrusted. If I favour myself in a known error, or am determined by my own ease in a doubtful question of this importance, how dreadful is my crime!"

"No disease of the imagination," answered Imlac, "is so difficult of cure as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt; fancy and conscience then act interchangeably upon us, and so often shift their places that the illusions of one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other. If fancy presents images not moral or religious, the mind drives them away when they give it pain; but when melancholic notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without opposition, because we are afraid to exclude or banish them. For this reason the superstitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almost always superstitious.

"But do not let the suggestions of timidity over-

power your better reason ; the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation which, when you consider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day less. Open your heart to the influence of the light which, from time to time, breaks in upon you ; when scruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not stand to parley, but fly to business or to Pekuah, and keep this thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the mass of humanity, and have neither such virtue nor vice as that you should be singled out for supernatural favours or afflictions."

## CHAPTER XLVII.

*THE PRINCE ENTERS, AND BRINGS A NEW TOPIC.*

"ALL this," said the astronomer, "I have often thought, but my reason has been so long subjugated by an uncontrollable and overwhelming idea, that it durst not confide in its own decisions. I now see how fatally I betrayed my quiet, by suffering chimeras to prey upon me in secret; but melancholy shrinks from communication, and I never found a man before to whom I could impart my troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own sentiments confirmed by yours, who are not easily deceived, and can have no motive or purpose to deceive. I hope that time and variety will dissipate the gloom that has so long surrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be spent in peace."

"Your learning and virtue," said Imlac, "may justly give you hopes."

Rasselas then entered with the princess and Pekuah, and inquired whether they had contrived any new diversions for the next day? "Such," said Nekayah, "is the state of life that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itself is nothing; when we have made it, the next wish is to change again. The world is not yet exhausted;



let me see something to-morrow which I never saw before."

"Variety," said Rasselas, "is so necessary to content, that even the Happy Valley disgusted me by the recurrence of its luxuries; yet I could not forbear to reproach myself with impatience, when I saw the monks of St. Anthony support without complaint a life, not of uniform delight, but uniform hardship."

"Those men," answered Imlac, "are less wretched in their silent convent than the Abyssinian princes in their prison of pleasure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reasonable motive. Their labour supplies them with necessaries; it therefore cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded. Their devotion prepares them for another state, and reminds them of its approach while it fits them for it. Their time is regularly distributed; one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of listless inactivity. There is a certain task to be performed at an appropriated hour; and their toils are cheerful, because they consider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endless felicity."

"Do you think," said Nekayah, "that the monastic rule is a more holy and less imperfect state than any other? May not he equally hope for future happiness who converses openly with mankind, who succours the distressed by his charity, instructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes by his industry to the general system of life; even though he should omit some of the mortifications which are



practised in the cloister, and allow himself such harmless delights as his condition may place within his reach?"

"This," said Imlac, "is a question which has long divided the wise, and perplexed the good. I am afraid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world, is better than he that lives well in a monastery. But perhaps every one is not able to stem the temptations of public life; and if he cannot conquer he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have likewise little strength to resist evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adversity, and are willing to eject those passions which have long busied them in vain. And many are dismissed by age and diseases from the more laborious duties of society. In monasteries the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not purpose to close his life in pious abstraction with a few associates as serious as himself."

"Such," said Pekuah, "has often been my wish, and I have heard the princess declare that she could not willingly die in a crowd."

"The liberty of using harmless pleasures," proceeded Imlac, "will not be disputed; but it is still to be examined what pleasures are harmless. The evil of any pleasure that Nekayah can image is not in the act itself, but in its consequences. Pleasure, in itself harmless, may become mischievous by en-

dearing us to a state which we know to be transient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itself, nor has any other use, but that it disengages us from the allurements of sense. In the state of future perfection, to which we all aspire, there will be pleasure without danger, and security without restraint."

The princess was silent, and Rasselas, turning to the astronomer, asked him whether he could not delay her retreat by showing her something which she had not seen before?

"Your curiosity," said the sage, "has been so general, and your pursuit of knowledge so vigorous, that novelties are not now very easily to be found; but what you can no longer procure from the living may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the Catacombs, or the ancient repositories in which the bodies of the earliest generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "what pleasure the sight of the Catacombs can afford; but, since nothing else is offered, I am resolved to view them, and shall place this with many other things which I have done, because I would do something."

They hired a guard of horsemen, and the next day visited the Catacombs. When they were about to descend into the sepulchral caves, "Pekuah," said the princess, "we are now again invading the habita-

tions of the dead ; I know that you will stay behind ; let me find you safe when I return."

"No, I will not be left," answered Pekuah, "I will go down between you and the prince."

They then all descended, and roved with wonder through the labyrinth of subterraneous passages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either side.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

*IMLAC DISCOURSES ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL.*

“WHAT reason,” said the prince, “can be given why the Egyptians should thus expensively preserve those carcasses which some nations consume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their sight, as soon as decent rites can be performed?”

“The origin of ancient customs,” said Imlac, “is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cause has ceased; and concerning superstitious ceremonies it is vain to conjecture; for what reason did not dictate, reason cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming arose only from tenderness to the remains of relations or friends, and to this opinion I am more inclined, because it seems impossible that this care should have been general; had all the dead been embalmed, their repositories must in time have been more spacious than the dwellings of the living. I suppose only the rich or honourable were secured from corruption, and the rest left to the course of nature.

“But it is commonly supposed that the Egyptians believed the soul to live as long as the body continued

undissolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death."

"Could the wise Egyptians," said Nekayah, "think so grossly of the soul? If the soul could once survive its separation, what could it afterwards receive or suffer from the body?"

"The Egyptians would doubtless think erroneously," said the astronomer, "in the darkness of heathenism, and the first dawn of philosophy. The nature of the soul is still disputed amidst all our opportunities of clearer knowledge; some yet say that it may be material, who nevertheless believe it to be immortal."

"Some," answered Imlac, "have indeed said that the soul is material, but I can scarcely believe that any man has thought it who knew how to think; for all the conclusions of reason enforce the immateriality of mind, and all the notices of sense and investigations of science concur to prove the unconsciousness of matter.

"It was never supposed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we suppose to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, density, bulk, motion, and direction of motion: to which of these, however varied or combined, can consciousness be annexed? To be round or square, to be solid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved slowly or swiftly one way or another, are modes of material existence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If matter be once without thought, it can only be made

to think by some new modification; but all the modifications which it can admit are equally unconnected with cogitative powers."

"But the materialists," said the astronomer, "urge that matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted."

"He who will determine," returned Imlac, "against that which he knows, because there may be something which he knows not; he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings. All that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, senseless, and lifeless; and if this conviction cannot be opposed but by referring us to something that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be overruled by that which is unknown, no being, not omniscient, can arrive at certainty."

"Yet let us not," said the astronomer, "too arrogantly limit the Creator's power."

"It is no limitation of omnipotence," replied the poet, "to suppose that one thing is not consistent with another, that the same proposition cannot be at once true and false, that the same number cannot be even and odd, that cogitation cannot be conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation."

"I know not," said Nekayah, "any great use of this question. Does that immateriality which, in my opinion, you have sufficiently proved, necessarily include eternal duration?"

"Of immateriality," said Imlac, "our ideas are negative, and therefore obscure. Immateriality seems

to imply a natural power of perpetual duration as a consequence of exemption from all causes of decay : whatever perishes is destroyed by the solution of its contexture, and separation of its parts ; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and therefore admits no solution, can be naturally corrupted or impaired."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "how to conceive anything without extension. What is extended must have parts, and you allow that whatever has parts may be destroyed."

"Consider your own conceptions," replied Imlac, "and the difficulty will be less. You will find substance without extension. An ideal form is no less real than material bulk ; yet an ideal form has no extension. It is no less certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind possesses the idea of a pyramid, than that the pyramid itself is standing. What space does the idea of a pyramid occupy more than the idea of a grain of corn ? or how can either idea suffer laceration ? As is the effect, such is the cause ; as thought, such is the power that thinks ; a power impassive and indiscerptible."

"But the Being," said Nekayah, "whom I fear to name, the Being which made the soul, can destroy it."

"He surely can destroy it," answered Imlac, "since, however unperishable, it receives from a superior nature its power of duration. That it will not perish by any inherent cause of decay, or principle of corruption, may be shown by philosophy ; but philosophy can tell no more. That it will not be



annihilated by him that made it, we must humbly learn from higher authority."

The whole assembly stood awhile silent and collected. "Let us return," said Rasselas, "from this scene of mortality. How gloomy would be these mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he should never die; that what now acts shall continue its agency, and what now thinks shall think on for ever. Those that lie here stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state; they were, perhaps, snatched away while they were busy like us in the choice of life."

"To me," said the princess, "the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity."

They then hastened out of the caverns, and, under the protection of their guard, returned to Cairo.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

*THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH NOTHING IS  
CONCLUDED.*

IT was now the time of the inundation of the Nile : a few days after their visit to the Catacombs the river began to rise.

They were confined to their house. The whole region, being under water, gave them no invitation to any excursions, and, being well supplied with materials for talk, they diverted themselves with comparisons of the different forms of life which they had observed, and of various schemes of happiness which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never so much charmed with any place as the convent of St. Anthony, where the Arab restored her to the princess, and wished only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioress of the order : she was weary of expectation and disgust, and would gladly be fixed in some unvariable state.

The princess thought, that of all sublunary things knowledge was the best ; she desired first to learn all sciences, and then proposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the

young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.

The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of the government with his own eyes ; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life, without directing their course to any particular port.

Of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could obtain. They deliberated awhile what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abyssinia.



## NOTE. PAGE 399.

### ORIGIN OF THE EGYPTIAN MANNER OF EMBALMING THE DEAD.

THE practice of embalming was probably connected with an early revelation of the resurrection of the body. "Insect transformation is so striking and pleasant an emblem of the present, the intermediate, and the glorified states of man, that people of the most remote antiquity, when they buried their dead, embalmed and enclosed them in an artificial covering, so figured and painted as to resemble the caterpillar or silkworm in the intermediate state; and as Joseph was the first we read of that was embalmed in Egypt, where this custom prevailed, it was very probably of Hebrew origin."—*Rev. W. Jones of Nayland's Works*. Lond. 1810, vol. iv. p. 70. In the same way the Greeks called the soul and the butterfly by one and the same name, *viz.*, "Psyche." And on some of their ancient gravestones we find a butterfly carved over the name of the departed. Coleridge thus muses on this parable:

"The butterfly the ancient Grecian made  
The soul's fair emblem, and its only name—  
But of the soul escaped the slavish trade  
Of mortal life! For in this earthly frame  
Ours is the reptile's lot, much toil, much blame,  
Manifold motions making little speed,  
And to deform and kill the things whereon we feed."

W. W.



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## Notices of the Press.

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**"The Daily News," October 5, 1881.**

"Our age has been described as one of abridgments and of little books. There are pocket manuals of all the sciences, and all knowledge has been condensed till it could almost be forced into the proverbial nutshell. We seem to be coming round to Edgar Poe's opinion, that a long poem is a contradiction in terms. 'Selections' are made from all the poets for the comfort of people of moderate leisure and limited perseverance. Mr. Matthew Arnold has relieved Byron and Wordsworth of their superfluous baggage, and much of the wealth of English lyrics is commodiously packed in the 'Golden Treasury.' Messrs. Nimmo & Bain, the publishers of a very handsome edition of the old Spanish romances of adventure, seem to have a higher opinion of the perseverance of modern readers. In twelve pretty volumes, bound in parchment and illustrated with etchings, we have English versions of 'Don Quixote,' 'Gil Blas,' 'Vanillo Gonzales,' 'Asmodeus,' 'Lazarillo de Tormes,' and 'Guzman d'Alfarache,' that famed picaroon and noted rogue of Spain. Many of these romances are Spanish chiefly in local colour and in remote origin. Others are the work, suggested by Spanish models, of the illustrious Le Sage, whose biography, by that accomplished and learned critic, Mr. Saintsbury, is prefixed to 'Gil Blas.' The merit for modern readers of these old stories lies partly in their inexhaustible wit, their knowledge of human nature, which never grows stale, and partly in their pictures of the old reckless life of Spain. A typical example of these novels is the fictitious autobiography of Guzman d'Alfarache, the Spanish rogue, written by Matthew Aleman at the beginning of the seventeenth century."

**"The Daily Telegraph," December 10, 1881.**

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